

PZ
3

FT MEADE
GenColl

.W671V

Variety Tales



B.C. Williams.



ZIM WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE BEAUTY OF THE PLACE.

VARIETY TALES.

EXAMPLES OF KINDS OF SHORT STORIES.

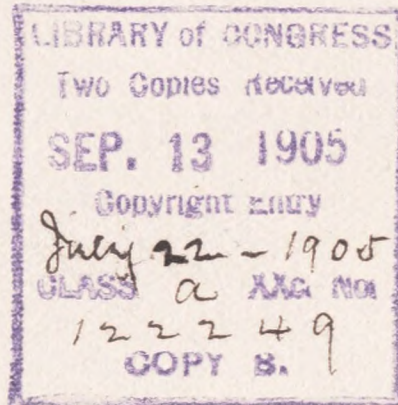
By

B. C. WILLIAMS.



CINCINNATI:
PRESS OF JENNINGS AND GRAHAM,
1905.

PZ3
.W671V



COPYRIGHT, 1905,
By B. C. WILLIAMS.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



05-32321

Dedicated to My Father.

CONTENTS!

I. SLUMBER SONG—A POEM,	7
II. A NEST—A STORY OF CHILDREN AND BIRDS,	9
III. A LAND OF CONTENT—A MORAL STORY,	15
IV. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELFINNIS—A DETECTIVE STORY,	22
V. THE GHOST OF THE MARBLE FACE—A GHOST STORY,	28
VI. SOMETHING MISSING—A HUMOROUS NEW ENGLAND STORY,	33
VII. MIRACULOUS HAPPENINGS—A CYCLONE STORY,	42
VIII. TONY AND FLUFFY—A FABLE,	45
IX. FATE OR PROPHECY—A HORROR STORY,	50
X. A COLONIAL FAIRY STORY,	57
XI. A CHILD OF MUSIC—A BOARDING-SCHOOL STORY,	64
XII. A TRIAL AT ENTERTAINING—A DRAMATIC STORY,	71
XIII. MRS. ASBORN THE VILLAGE GOSSIP—A DIALECT AND BURLESQUE STORY,	77
XIV. WHEN THE WAYS ARE THREE—AN ALLEGORY,	82
XV. SHUFFLING ALONG—A CHARACTER SKETCH,	87
XVI. CAUGHT BY THE SEA—A LOVE STORY,	92
XVII. THE ADVENTURES OF ZIM—AN ADVENTURE STORY,	99
XVIII. DOUBLE EDITING—A DECIDED PLOT,	107
XIX. ONLY AN EASTER EGG—A RELIGIOUS STORY,	114
XX. A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE—A TRUE COM- MERCIAL STORY,	124
XXI. SLUMBER-LAND—A DESCRIPTION,	132

SLUMBER-LAND.

Little baby slumbers long,
Dreams perhaps of mother's song;
Hears the flowers talking low;
Hears the stories, how below
Flowers dance at midnight dark
In the woods and in the park.

Little baby lies asleep,
Dreaming? Yes, of mother, deep
In that happy slumber-land;
There she sees an angel band,
Hears the music softly sound,
Dreams of flowers all around.

Flowers red and flowers light,
Like a rainbow, O so bright!
But good-night the sweet stars say,
While we whisper our good-day;
Sleeping lies our baby sweet,
Dreaming where the angels meet.

VARIETY TALES.



A NEST.

A STORY OF CHILDREN AND BIRDS.

It was the prettiest kind of a home, way up in the old apple-tree, and the proud mother chirped sweetly at having such a fair place to live in. Not one of the more beautiful singers of the air could surpass her in joy, although they could excel her in song.

She was only a small, plain sparrow, but nevertheless she loved life as well as her richer-plumed friends. To-day she worked busily, making her home pleasanter. Now and then she glanced into the distance as if watching for some one.

Beneath the tree sat a little girl watching the dainty, busy creatures; but her heart trembled with fear when she thought what might happen if Tom, her brother, who disliked sparrows, should see the little sparrow.

As she sat watching, she saw the father bird return to his nest, and she felt she could almost understand the joyful welcome the mother bird gave

him. So great seemed the father bird's joy that he poured it forth in a low, sweet song, which was caught up by many other birds. Dorothy sat very still for a long time, listening to the song, and then, fearing to disturb their pleasure, she stole away on tiptoe.

When, some days later, Dorothy stood below the tree, she discovered that a little band of strangers had come into this small home. Eight bright eyes opened, catching a glimpse of the same sunlight that she was enjoying. Dorothy felt she knew just what the mother bird was saying, and felt sure that her own mother would have said the same.

"She is telling me," thought Dorothy, "to look at her dear ones, and see what beautiful little creatures have come to her tiny nest."

"Ah, how busy I am!" thought the songster. "But how pleasant to be busy when it is to feed these small mouths and hear their sweet welcome to us!"

Life was full of happiness for the sparrow family, until one day the father bird returned home with a sad story, and fear filled the mother's heart. A stone had but narrowly escaped hitting him, and he knew that some day one might strike him and leave his loved family alone.

Days full of golden hours glided by for the occupants of the nest.

One day the mother's heart grew cold with fear, for the father had not returned. Bravely the mother fed her babies as best she could, and when evening came she told her sad story of how she feared their

father had gone away, and she asked God, who cares for even poor sparrows, to keep guard over them.

"I will get you food, little ones; now be good till I return." And she flew away, a sad heart beating beneath the soft, smooth feathers.

Suddenly she saw a small boy, a handsome lad, and in his hand he held a limp, lifeless little being. Only that morning the tiny, bleeding form had been full of life and joy, and made the air sweet with its happy voice. Now, cold and still in the child's hand it lay, and the mother's heart broke, for it was the father of her hungry children.

She fed the wee ones and planned soon to teach them to fly, that they might be able to feed themselves if anything happened to her.

Now Dorothy's mother lay very ill, and Tom did not feel so lively, even though, as he expressed it, when thinking of his success of the day before, he had made a dead easy shot and killed the poor little sparrow. Dot, who had not heard of yesterday's shot, thought he spoke of the poor bird he had killed just five days before when she had seen him holding its lifeless, bleeding form.

"Sparrows ain't any good," said he.

"O brother!" sobbed Dorothy, "that one you killed, five days ago to-day, was the father bird, and the mother is left all alone to feed the little ones. In her chirping the other morning, there was such a sad note; she wants the father. If papa died, I don't believe I could stand it. I'm too small to work, and unless mother was here to care for me

I do n't know what would happen to me. Now the papa bird is dead, if—if some one kills the mother, then those darling babies must die too. Would you like to be shot or have father shot?"

Tom's face grew sober. At heart, he was only careless, not purposely cruel, but simply thoughtless, and so eleven-year-old Tom said:

"Sister, I never thought of them as having feelings before, or loving their children as mother does us. I did not think they liked to live as we do,—but of course they do; and if it came down to it, I would not enjoy being shot,—it must cause lots of pain and make one suffer so. I guess in their way they are as joyful as we."

A silence followed; then—

"Dot—"

There was another pause.

"Yes, Tom."

In a trembling but manly voice, Tom said:

"Dot, I killed the mother bird three days after I did the father."

There was silence, and Dot began to cry. Tom did not call her cry-baby, as he usually did, for he was now gravely thoughtful. Already he was at heart a grand man. Such a man as not only loved life and joy, but longed to be good to all poor dumb creatures, who can only tell us their happiness and love by being fair to see or singing sweetly to help make the world brighter and better. Every boy wants to be a man. A true, noble man protects the weak—those unable to protect themselves. Tom was

a strong-hearted boy, and he said in a ringing voice, with just a slight quiver:

"I tell you, Dot, let's find the lonely birdies and feed them; that is all I can do now. I used to call you a foolish, tender-hearted girl. You are good-hearted; but I do n't think it silly for you or unmanly for me, because, as mother said, I'm getting to be a big boy and soon will be a man, so I must grow to be a kind one, caring for the weak and loving the tiny beings that—"

"God has given to make the world fairer and to teach us many a lesson," said Dot. "I remember mother's exact words, they were so sweet."

Now mother was ill, and a terrible thought came into Tom's heart. If she died, his beautiful, sweet mother! He knew now that, although the birds can not talk in our language, in their wee, piping tones they must be pitifully calling for their mother, as he would if his mother went up to God's home.

His heart ached, and he laid his head on his arm and sobbed aloud, for that very day the doctor had said there was little chance of her recovery. Then, raising his head, he said:

"I guess it do n't hurt a man to show his feelings sometimes, does it?"

Dot put her hand on his and answered: "Indeed no; it shows you have a good, manly heart."

They went to the nest to feed the young ones, but the dying cries of the baby birds had grown faint. The fledglings, deprived of mother, father, and food, had laid their poor little starved selves

down to die. As Tom gazed at them, the last one, with its tiny mouth open as if for the long-watched-for food, uttering a feeble cry, that sounded to Tom like "Mother, mother," lay cold and still.

"O Dot, if our mother should die, I can never forget that bird's cry!"

As she began to sob he said: "Do n't cry, Dot. Mamma can't die! O she can't!"

A prayer went up from both the children's hearts, and God, in His goodness, left them their mother.

Tom, playing marbles with the boys in the yard, as he saw his mother strong and well, going about her work in the house, remembered the birds he had deprived of their mother, and, stopping in his play, he stood up to his full height and spoke to his friends:

"Boys, it will be a long time before I'll be a man, but, I tell you what! I'm going to begin now to stand up for the smaller, more helpless beings,—the birds!"

"We will join you, Tom, and help care for the birds," cried one of the boys.

The others answered with a hearty cheer, and a little bird began to sing as if it understood their words, which were to help make life so happy for them.

THE LAND OF CONTENT.

A MORAL STORY.

"THE world is so big and so dark, mother, I wonder if there are no flowers or sunshine for me?"

The speaker was a small, deformed girl of fourteen. Her large, brown eyes were beautiful but for a vacant expression, for to her all was dark; she had not seen the daylight for three long years.

"Sometimes I think, mother dear, that if I had never seen the sunlight I might not miss it so!"

The mother looked longingly, tenderly, at her daughter, but her heart was too full for speech.

"Why had I that long, long illness, that crippled my body and closed my eyes? Why, O why do I live like this, a burden to all?"

Then lovingly the mother placed her hand on the brown head.

"Little one, you are all I have, and my joy in life is to wait on you. Even so crippled you can lighten my burdens by your dear presence near me; indeed, you make life worth the living. How selfish we would grow, my child, if there were none who needed our care and watchful love!"

"But it is all give for you, mother, and all take for me."

"It is a joy to do for you, only I wish I could

bring smiles to your face, for my heart aches for you," and with a tender kiss she left her.

Ferel sat a long while thinking of all her mother had said, and longing for—she knew not what.

Suddenly before the girl came a light so beautiful she felt dazed by its brightness, and she put her hands to her eyes with a cry.

"I see, I see! O, I am not blind!" she cried.

"You see, Ferel, with your mind only; now let me teach you to see with your heart."

"Then I am blind, blind!" she cried to the fair woman by her side. "Yet I see you in your bright, sunshine gown."

"I am a being from Content Land, and sometimes I come when called. Did you not ask how you could be of help, and did you not say you received all and gave nothing? Come with me, and be for a space strong and well, and I will show you the Land of Content."

So she arose, and stood straight, with seeing eyes, and followed the dainty stranger.

The path was hard and tiresome, and, bruised and weary, she ever struggled onward after her Guide. When they reached the top of the mountain she saw a strange sight. Many men were digging deep holes in the ground, and taking from them great rocks. The rocks they covered with dirt, and planted seeds therein; and, behold, they were soon covered with green moss and flowers. The men were so small, and the rocks so large and heavy, that Ferel wondered how they could lift them.

"What are they doing?" she asked.

"They are lifting the burdens of other people," answered her companion, "and planting beautiful things in their lives and hearts instead. Every rock is a burden lifted for some poor, sorrowing soul. They can tell every time, after they have planted a seed of content, whether it has taken root and is growing, by the way the green moss and flowers cover the rock."

"Your rock is well covered, but some seem barren still," said Ferel. "Will they ever be as beautiful as this?" and she pointed to a rock covered with the most beautiful moss and flowers.

The Guide said: "We hope they will be as fair, but some have greater burdens to withstand."

"Has every one a stone here?"

"Yes, every one," said she. "Yonder is yours."

As Ferel looked, she beheld a huge rock covered with rich earth, but barren of moss or flowers.

"My rock is not beautiful; O! it is barren! But, then, so is my life barren of all joy; for am I not a cripple and blind?"

"You are indeed blind. Many are born so, but you have seen beauty, and, like one who has once seen and heard a wonderful opera, you have the memory to sweeten your dark hours. Forget yourself, and live for your mother and others."

"I can not; I am only a burden," she moaned.

"Go farther, child, and you will understand."

So she followed the Guide, and, behold, she came to a large lake on the top of this lofty moun-

tain. It was black and very dirty, but men were busy dipping cupful after cupful from it, and separating the thick mud from the water. When they had succeeded, as sometimes they did, the cleared water was cast into what appeared a great well.

"It is so black it can never be made clear," sighed Ferel.

"Look into the well, and see the lovely water of Content Land, where one can drink and be refreshed," answered her friend.

So Ferel leaned over the side of the well, and gazed into water which was as clear as crystal.

The Guide said, "Drink."

Then from a golden goblet she tasted the refreshing water, and she felt strangely glad that she was alive; a feeling of supreme joy pervaded her whole being.

"How deep is the well?" she asked. "Can many partake of its water?"

"It has no bottom, and is ever being refilled," answered her companion. "All can drink who will, and be filled with the peace that is of heaven."

"These men are strong and well," she said, sadly. "They can do for others, as mother does, but not I."

Then, behold, a great change came before her eyes. The men were still there, the lake, the mountain, and the well, but such sad-looking men, if physical suffering is sad; and, indeed, it fills one's heart with pain for the sufferer. Some had no limbs, and lay on beds of straw, wearily trying to lift the goblet of dark water and separate the mud

from the water. Some, the Guide told her, had no friends or home, and but little earthly wealth; but they, too, worked patiently with the water. Others were blind like herself, and some poor as well.

Ah! no one can imagine the suffering she saw!

She turned a face full of sorrow to her Guide, and in answer to her mute question she said:

“Gaze upon their faces.”

Behold, as she did so she noticed that a strange look of joy was in each and every one,—a light so beautiful in some faces that she marveled at its glory.

“How can they look so happy when they are suffering so?” she asked.

“They endure physical suffering, and did suffer mentally; but they gave so much of their love and sweet patience and gentle words, that it makes about them the sunshine you see; and all who come in contact with them feel it, and carry away a share of its brightness within their hearts. Now, you must depart; you are blind and crippled still; for your sight here, and your strength, were only the blessings which people often find when visiting me. You forgot, to a certain extent, your pain in looking and sharing that of others here.”

Then Ferel awoke, for she had been dreaming; but the peace was still in her heart. Days past, and years, and Ferel still lived in the pretty little cottage with her mother. Friends flocked in often to see her, and her mother's face appeared less careworn,

while a smile and a song were often heard as she busied herself about her work.

"The days are so short, mother dear," said Ferel, "and yet so bright that I feel as if it were all sunshine out of doors. I remember how bright it used to seem to me when, as a child, I used to close my eyes to shut out so much glory, it dazzled me. I made a mistake; I should have taken it all in, and stored a share for future use to scatter over all the world when the storms beat in all their fury."

"I am richer than a king," laughed the mother. "I have sunshine all the year round; shadows flit across my vision now and then, but soon peace reigns in my heart, and I can say 'God's will be done,' and see the sunshine drive away the gloom."

That night Ferel slept and dreamed she saw before her the top of a huge mountain, and heard the voice of her Guide:

"Put it in the center, men; there let it rest. I would that the whole world could see it."

A great rock stood towering towards the sky, but such a beautiful rock, covered with a rich, green moss, thick with lilies pure as fresh-fallen snow. Then before her she saw a glass of pure water, clear as crystal, and the one who held it smiled in joy, and the whole place seemed covered with a golden cloud, and faded from view.

Ferel cried out in supreme joy: "Is it true, O Guide, that my name is written there in your Land of Content, where peace and happiness fill the heart and soul? I, a cripple and blind!—I, who can not

walk or run about, and can not feel or see, except in my heart, the joys or beauties of this lovely world!— is it true, O Guide, that content and peace are mine?”

A voice from the cloud was carried in the great arms of a mighty wind, and, like sweet music, it fell on the heart of the listener.

The voice said, “It is true.”

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELFINNIS.

A DETECTIVE STORY.

FAIRYLAND was excited; the good queen wept, and the detectives worked; for Elfinnis, the dark-haired fairy child, who was, some day, to be queen of Fairyland, had disappeared.

In the early morning, Elfinnis had been seen making a wreath of sweet-clover blossoms; a little later, she had been seen paddling in the river. Since then, no one had beheld her.

As far as Enis, the chief of the detective force, could discover, the child when last seen was dressed much like any other little one of the kingdom.

"We always dress her plainly in the morning, so that she can play in the dust and dirt as other children do. We think it will make her strong and healthy," explained the queen.

After close inquiry, Enis learned that the child's heavy braids of hair had been tied with twisted gold ribbons, which, as a mark of royalty, she always wore. The ribbons were exactly alike.

Later, when the river was searched, Enis came with haste to the palace, holding in his hand a golden cord. At sight of the cord, the queen wept bitterly and declared the child must have been drowned.

"I doubt it," said Enis; at which remark the other detectives shrugged their shoulders. "You all

believe that she is lost. To be sure we found her stockings in the river; but still that is no proof of the child's having been drowned. First let me ask my royal queen a question. Were the golden cords exactly the same?" At a reply in the affirmative, Enis said:

"Well, here is the other cord; but if you examine it closely, you will find that the initial E is not woven in the center of the ribbon; otherwise they are exactly the same."

The ladies declared that E had been on both ribbons.

"There is something underneath this mystery, and I, for one, believe the dark-haired princess lives."

That night the dwarf Enis dressed himself in the common suit of the elves. Being extremely small, he would have passed as an elf rather than a dwarf, almost anywhere, in that suit.

After dusk he went down by the river, and waited until he heard the shrill whistle of the elf-band. At dusk the elves enjoy a wild, weird dance in the most dense part of the forest, and it was this festive entertainment that Enis had come to join. When a jolly, brown-coated elf, named Fin, punched Enis in the back, and afterwards offered him a green-water lemonade, he felt that his disguise was complete. After the dance he placed himself by Fin, and laughingly asked him if the foolish fairies had even a slight idea of their (the elves') success in stealing Elfinnis.

"Are you sure we did it?" asked the elf, at once suspicious.

"Sure? Why was it not my cousin that helped you do it?" asked Enis.

Now that he had ventured on such dangerous ground, he felt he must continue to pretend knowledge of what, in truth, he knew nothing about.

"Ah! your cousin Keny?" asked the elf.

Enis may not have been as quick-footed as a real elf, but in keenness of wit a fairy dwarf can not be surpassed by the elves. He saw by a quick glance at the elf's face that Keny was a fictitious name, and he judged he had met for once his equal in an elf.

"By no means, for no such elf exists," Enis answered.

"Forgive me," said the elf. "I have to watch lest by any chance the fairies learn of the real whereabouts of Elfinnis."

Enis now felt sure of his point, but he dared not ask more questions.

The next morning, Enis spoke to no one of his evening's experience, but he took a lunch and walked over to Thought, a village some ten miles from the Palace of Wonders, where the royal family dwelt. He arrived there in the evening, and stopped to chat with a round-faced fairy peasant. She was a pretty, talkative fairy, and Enis was not long learning that, the evening before, a dark-haired boy, dressed like an elf, but with sea-blue eyes and the form of a fairy prince, had passed by.

"He must have wandered from elf-land, for his

companion was an evil-looking elf; but some time the boy must have had a fairy bestow gifts on him, for kinder manners and softer, more soothing voice a royal fairy never possessed. They passed up yonder street, going north, I should think towards Reason. The wicked big elf pulled out a lock of my hair as thanks for a glass of clear water I gave him."

"Remember," said Enis, "that there is but one dark-haired being that we have ever heard of; in elf-land or fairy-land there is no other: that one is our future queen, Elfinnis."

Then the girl wept. "My brain is thick-skinned," she said. "Even dressed as a youth I might have known her sweet ways and soft voice. Let me aid you on your return to the court, and pray tell the detectives there that I saw Elfinnis pass by here."

"You jump at conclusions very quickly," he said, and taking the offered lunch he went on his way.

When he had reached the woods, he took a side path for Reason. Following the clews he got there, which were in line with what he had heard at Thought, he spent many days journeying from Reason to Clear Judgment, Skillful Station, Work Town, and came three weeks later to the fairy queen's winter home, a large city called Conclusion.

In Conclusion, Enis dug a deep hole beside a large oak-tree, and in the evening he came and sat down by the side of it, attired in the same elf suit he had worn before when with the elves. At dusk

he heard the approach of the elves. As they emerged from the door in the tree that leads them from their under world, one after another stumbled into the ditch he had dug. As one got to his feet, another fell in and threw him down again. This caused great commotion, and angry words and blows fell thick and fast. As one after the other, warned by the angry cries of their fellow elves, or else thinking there had broken forth a war, which elves always enjoy, fell into the deep hole, the keen eyes of Enis watched for the slight form of an elf who might be Elfinnis.

"Keep back," said an elf, whose wicked face showed even more hideous in the light of the moon which had just risen on high.

Before the tiny elf could do as he was bidden, Enis reached one long arm out and lifted the boy high into the air. He then whistled for a fairy bird, and journeyed homeward with what he believed was Elfinnis.

As he neared the river where the ribbons had been found he heard the sound of a cry, and going into a thicket near by he found a child so similar in looks to the boy that he was startled.

"Who is who?" he questioned in a puzzled voice, and an elf answered him.

"The little girl asleep here is the real fairy princess. I pray you please give back our boy you stole in Conclusion. You did not know we had a dark-haired child, but this lad is our future king."

Enis was a wise man, and had not been in the

detective business for so long a time to be cheated now of his honors in fathoming the greatest detective case in fairy-land, the finding of the fairy, Elfinnis. So he bade the angry elf wait, and he carried both children to the palace, and let the queen mother choose her own; then he gave the other to the elf.

“I knew my clues were good ones,” said the dwarf Enis, “and, friends, I knew that Elfinnis the child, dressed as a boy, that I found in Conclusion, was our future queen, and the other ribbon she had dropped in the house before she was lost.”

THE GHOST OF THE MARBLE FACE.

A GHOST STORY.

"GHOSTS, how foolish!" Mr. Adams laughed in scorn at the ignorance of the village people, and he looked again at the little old gabled house before him.

It had the aspect of a place deserted. Certainly, of late years, the gods of prosperity and beauty had forsaken this dwelling. Weeds almost as high as a man's head surrounded the place, while here and there a sunflower raised his bright head as if to mock the loneliness of this secluded home, and cast a ray of light amid the shadows and cobwebs on its dirty, unpainted roof. Except for spiders here and there in the windows, no living thing dwelt there.

"Would I live there?" he answered to a question from his companion. "Indeed, I would not mind doing so. I have a clear conscience, and fear nothing in this forsaken place."

That night Mr. Adams determined to prove his statement, and he announced to an astonished landlord that he wished to rent the gabled house if the price was not too high. He need not have feared about the price, for the man was only too willing to rent the forsaken place at any price.

So on a Friday, amid the dismayed faces of his friends, he moved into his bachelor quarters, for his

friends refused to accompany him. They had heard too many stories of the man with the marble face, who was said to haunt the rooms of the house.

It was said that the man who died there had committed some theft, and his ghost wished to put the hidden treasure into a human hand to be delivered to its owner, whose name must be hidden with the stolen property. People differed as to what was the article stolen.

This ghost had a marble-white face, that had caused many a person who gazed upon it to lose his mind. On close inquiry, Mr. Adams found that exactly one man, never of sound mind, had gone into the house, and came out with wild, insane stories of the things he had seen. He claimed the ghost loved the treasure still, and might not want to part with it at the last moment.

So Mr. Adams moved in, and made the old rattle-trap as comfortable as possible. He retired at dusk, amused beyond words at the quiet, peaceful first day he had spent without a sign of a ghost.

Suddenly, as he was about to sink into slumber, he heard a queer, clicking noise, such as a man makes when he is trying to draw the attention of a squirrel. He opened his eyes and sat up in bed.

The moonlight reflected into the upright mirror he had brought with him, and in it, as plain as day, he saw a face. It was a terrible face,—white, cold, and expressionless; indeed, it was a marble face! Despite his boast, cold drops of perspiration stood on his brow.

As he put one foot out of bed, the figure turned and advanced towards him. He sat as if he was carved in marble.

A bony hand, as white and ghastly as the face, was held towards him, and cold chills ran races up and down his back. The deep-sunken eyes of the white, ghostly figure held him spellbound, and as it turned, beckoning him with one finger, he arose and followed, as if that awful, white object drew him, with a chain he could not loosen, after it.

"The marble face," for such he had ever heard the ghost called, opened a door which Mr. Adams had noticed the day before, and discovered that it led into a cellar. Following in his wake, unable to do otherwise, he passed with the ghost into the cellar.

Then he pointed to a pick, which, lying in the dusty, cobwebbed corner of the musty cellar, Mr. Adams had not noticed before.

"Dig," the ghost said. "Dig."

Jack Adams's heart seemed to stop beating; for alone in the darkness, with no light but the white form and a dim streak through the dirty cellar window from the bright moon, that voice seemed brought from the bottomless pit of the region called Horror.

Jack dug in the dirt-bottom of a corner of the cellar, and, when he would try to rest for a moment, that white face had but to draw near, its cold breath to fall like winter's coldest blast on his neck, and he worked on with perspiration streaming down his face like rain.

When he had dug for a long time, he began to feel something hard beneath his pick, and, behold, in time, he found what seemed to be a brass box. He held it up to the moonlight from the window, and aimed to open it.

"It's mine! I stole it; but it's mine! I lived for it; I died for it; I'm suffering for it; but, human form, I tell you it's mine, now and forever!"

The unearthly shriek rose high on the air; the long, bony arm stretched forth towards Jack; the marble face of the ghost was marble come to life; the sunken eyes burned his very body with their gaze! There, in the darkness, Jack Adams fought not for the box, but for life!

Suddenly he saw his chance to escape, and, evading the cold, clammy hand, he stumbled blindly up the cellar stairs. As he reached the top, he thought the ghost ceased to follow him. Turning in his unmanly flight, he saw framed in the doorway of the cellar, close to his side, once more the expressionless marble face!

When Jack came to himself, the sunlight streamed into the window of his room, and he sat in a most childish attitude on the floor by the bed. In his hand he held what, at one time, must have been a brass knocker, although the shape was such as he had never seen before or since. Sometimes Jack has thought there must be a key that would open it, for it is very heavy and thick through. "Perhaps," thought he, "the Marble Face must first be consulted as to the invisible keyhole of the brass thing—which

I feel sure someway must contain the treasure—and as to the whereabouts of the key.

Jack paid his rent the next day for the two months he had engaged the house, and finding it necessary to go immediately to New York on business, which he could not finish for many months, he wrote his friends that any of them might get the benefit of the rent free.

“Knowing that I have lived through one night there, I can not understand why they refused to comply; unless, unlike me, they have not an inquiring mind,” thought Jack.

In telling the story to a friend, Jack said in sober earnestness:

“I am sorry that I have never again seen the ghost; but you can well understand my trouble: it was an uneven choice for me between business, which no man can neglect, and the Ghost of the Marble Face.”

SOMETHING MISSING.

A HUMOROUS NEW ENGLAND STORY.

LINDONVILLE was certainly not a lively town. Every one complained of the dullness of the little village. Gradually, the people on Wright Street and for several blocks around came to the conclusion that there was something going on most of the time.

"Eventually, Mrs. Brown's son thinks he will wake up this here town," Miss Amer used to say.

The people shook their heads as if agreeing with this noted seamstress, and muttered, under their breath, that if Gerald Brown intended to wake up the town, he certainly had done so.

Now, Mrs. Brown and her son were new-comers to Lindonville. Gerald had in two days won his reputation as being the terror of the town. They lived next door to Miss Amer, and that good woman, having learned the fact in two hours after Gerald's arrival, communicated it to Mrs. Smith, and so it went the rounds. Had she forgotten to mention the fact (a thing she never did), young Gerald would soon have let the town know, for he had no intention of staying still when, as he expressed it, "There's just heaps of fun in sight."

"Why, Mrs. Smith," said Miss Amer, as she cut and sewed on a muslin dress. "That there new-

comer's boy, he be a terror. Well," as she threaded her needle. "This mornin' I was just a gettin' my dinner when I hear a most dreadful noise o' poundin'!"

"Any screams?" asked Mrs. Smith, interested.

"No," answered the seamstress with a slightly condescending tone of voice; "no, but the noise without screamin' were dreadful."

Miss Amer never professed to having received a college education, but many thought that she had never gone through even the first lessons in grammar. However, she sewed well, was interesting; that is, she talked much, and was a "good old soul," as every one remarked.

"Well, what do you think I seed in agoin' out that there back door and lookin' about?" she continued, dropping her hands into her lap, and looking excitedly into Mrs. Smith's face.

"What?" said that interested person in a low, startled whisper.

"He and them Kent boys, as ain't worth their salt and, with a leader, will get into any mischief, had knocked half my board fence down, which I had just had put between that there house and mine,—mind, knocked it down!" She almost screamed, and then, with a deep sigh of regret, she went on with her sewing, and waited to see what impression she had made on Mrs. Smith.

That was certainly the first of the many things with which Gerald began to waken the sleeping town.

Mrs. Brown called on Miss Amer shortly after she had complained to her about the fence. After taking a chair and making herself comfortable, this kind and loving mother began, as was her custom, to talk of "my son Gerald."

"Why, that boy," she declared, with a strong emphasis on the word *that*, "he is the brightest child I ever came across. He is never idle, always busy, bless his dear little self!"

Miss Amer tried to smile; but she omitted the blessing, although she agreed that he was a busy child.

"He is so original in his ideas," went on this proud parent.

"Well," remarked Miss Amer at last, so worked up that she could not resist putting in a word of censure, "if his tearin' down my new board fence was original, deliver me from such a boy; that 's agoin' too far."

Mrs. Brown good-naturedly took no offense, but smiled sweetly and answered:

"Well, just think, Miss Amer, what other boy would ever have thought of doing such a thing? Not one in a hundred! Then also you must remember that he said he was sorry, dear little lad."

Miss Amer had not forgotten the way in which he had expressed his sorrow. He had defied his mother's pleading that he would say the words, "I am sorry," and when, after much coaxing and a promised box of candy, he had at last blurted out the words, he had rushed by her and in so doing

caught his foot in her thin dress and tore the ruffle entirely off. Laughing as he saw her dismayed face, he had called back, "I 'm sorry, but I 'll do it again."

His devoted mother had said, upon hearing the remark :

"O boys will be boys ; so, dear Miss Amer, never mind," and looking fondly after the fast-disappearing figure, she heaved a sigh.

So now, without the least hesitation and with some bitterness, Miss Amer answered :

"Well, his bein' sorry do n't mend the gown or fence. I 'd like to know what you be agoin' to do about it. I ain't a buyin' fences mor 'n once a year ; not every day, you may make up your mind."

"O, Miss Amer, the yard looks so much nicer without the fence. If you would look on the cheerful side of things you would see that even from mischief develops some good. As for the fence, why, I will have one built if you can not be brought to look sensibly on the affair, and see that yards without fences look better."

With this remark Mrs. Brown's good intentions of rebuilding a finer fence ended.

Gerald, one summer day, decided to walk down to where Mrs. Fisher lived. She was having her barn painted, a proceeding which interested Gerald very much. Seeing no one around, young Gerald went straight into the barn, picked up a can of paint and a brush and looked about for mischief, which, when looked for, is not hard to find.

Mrs. Fisher had been making apple-pies. These

she put on the doorstep to cool, intending to take them in very soon. Her head ached from the extreme heat of the day and being over the hot stove. She was expecting company, in fact important company; for there was Ann's "beau" from the city, and his mother and sister. Being worn out and ill, she decided to lie down for ten minutes and rest. Her baby boy was asleep, and her work was almost finished.

Suddenly, Ann Fisher, Mrs. Fisher's only daughter, came rushing into the room, where sound-asleep Mrs. Fisher was spending a rather long ten minutes.

"Mother, mother, for pity's sake, wake up!" she cried.

"You home from town already so soon?" said her mother, slowly opening her eyes. "Is the baby still asleep?"

"O yes, baby is all right. But indeed, mother, I'm home, and the world has changed since I departed! The world, that is, in which Ann Fisher lived." Her eyes sparkled, and her laughter burst forth merrily upon the bewildered parent. Without allowing her mother a chance for speech, Ann continued: "O mother! your glorious pies, chickens, and house—O dear! it is too funny! What will Jack say?" and she continued laughing until she sank exhausted into the nearest chair. That noble woman, her mother, was wide-awake at the word "pies."

"For pity's sake, child, I believe you are crazy.

To be sure I made pies, and good ones too; but what is there to laugh at?"

"O mother, and have they lovely green frosting? and have you bought lovely green and yellow chickens, and had a new painter come and draw caricatures upon the front door and back? O, O!" and while Mrs. Fisher stood gazing blankly at her daughter, Ann went off into another peal of laughter.

"Well, you are certainly crazy! To be sure I made pies, and good ones too."

She left the room to get the pies.

On opening the door a most startling view presented itself. The steps, as if by magic, had houses, queer animals, and people wonderfully and hideously scattered upon them, in yellow and green, and presented a most startling appearance. Mrs. Fisher trembled, but staggered forward towards the top step on which she knew her pies had been lying. They were still there, but gorgeous beyond description, with the glorious colored frosting of—paint!

Mrs. Fisher felt that she was in a nightmare, and trembled from head to foot in her anger and astonishment. She hurried to the barn. Ann had said something about chickens—what? Mrs. Fisher pressed her hand to her head, but could not think. On entering the barn it was, however, unnecessary to think, for her beautiful hens had the queerest chickens she had ever beheld, and the hens themselves that were strutting about and making a loud noise were spotted with green and yellow. Such

green and yellow creatures few have seen. Mrs. Fisher never knew how she got back into the kitchen. Dimly she saw the huge, childishly drawn caricatures on the door as she stumbled into the kitchen, and burst out weeping.

"An artist, mother," called Ann, as she marched merrily into the room, with a wee baby of two on her shoulder, and followed by a strong, handsome man of twenty-four. Then she stopped short, and stood amazed at the picture of distress before her; for Mrs. Fisher was sobbing and rocking to and fro as hard as she could. She motioned Jack to follow her, and before Mrs. Fisher had found time to raise her head and reproach Ann for her untimely mirth, Ann and Jack had disappeared through the doorway and were on their way to Mrs. Smith; for Miss Amer, who was sewing there, would know just what to do.

While Ann was telling her tragic story, her mother wiped her tears away, brushed back her hair, straightened her white apron, and went in to welcome her guests; for she thought she heard their voices in the front room. Ann returned with warm-hearted but, at present, angry Miss Amer. Yet anger could not keep the laughter from the seamstress's face, as she beheld the fancy house and chickens; and as she declared:

"That there young scamp be mighty original, I'll no deny; but he'll find some one else is original too, if he ain't careful."

"That is what I say," laughed Ann, and she

started off with Jack at her side. They went on their way with a very determined step and look. Miss Amer, with the baby in her arms, marched into the house. Her anger knew no bounds, and she had already determined the first opportunity she had she would give the boy a good whipping.

Mrs. Brown's house, however, much to Miss Amer's surprise, was found vacant the next morning. Not a person was to be seen.

A week later, Miss Amer received a draft and a note, with the following contents:

"DEAR MISS AMER,—Here I enclose money for your fence. My blessed boy has been abused in your town, and I no longer care to live where the entire aim of the whole community seems to be to kill out all his originality. I trust that Ann Fisher and her city beau will some day realize what they have done. However, my boy is happy now, and I am proud to be the mother of so inventive a child. I will have him study drawing; his work for his age is wonderfully well done. If you lived in a city you would realize that yards without fences are much better. Yours truly,

"MRS. JULIET BROWN."

"She has really given me the money for the fence! She's a good soul after all; and beint she a worshiper of the boy?" laughed Miss Amer. "But Ann and her beau, what have they been a-doin'?" She must ha' used some of her college brains, and,

combined with his, they have succeeded in driving that scamp from town."

On asking Ann, and receiving her answer, Miss Amer remarked slowly and half to herself:

"Well, I had intended givin' the lad a whippin' meself; seein' as he got it anyhow, I do n't mind, only I'd sort of liked to ha' done it meself." Then to herself she remarked, with a tiny feeling of scorn:

"Why, she done just what I intended a-doin', and I hain't had a college education nither."

Ann was a very popular girl after that, and Miss Amer used to say, when any one happened to speak of how dull their town was:

"Well," with a wink at Ann, if she were present, "sure and there be somethin' lively in this here village a-missin', but I hain't no objection; it's sort o' pleasant, so I'm a-thinkin', a-missin' it."

MIRACULOUS HAPPENINGS.

A CYCLONE STORY.

How STILL and oppressive the air seemed! Lola Aron shut the door with a slam, "to promote a speck of a breeze," she explained to her brother, and then she sang softly as she went about her work.

Suddenly, she was disturbed by a low whistle from her brother, who had seated himself idly by an open window.

"Sister, just come and look at this cloud. Father will arrive in a storm, I fear."

Their father had been gone six months, and his children were preparing for his arrival on the morrow.

Lola, coming at her brother's call, saw moving steadily and rapidly a long, funnel-shaped cloud.

"What can it be? Surely it is shaped like a cyclone," she said.

A low roar greeted her words; it rose rapidly, and a strong wind shook the trees near the house.

"Stay here, Ned, and I'll shut the windows upstairs. I do believe it will be a wind-and-rain storm."

She fairly tottered on her way down the steps on her return to her brother, for the house shook to its foundation.

She reached the bottom in safety, and by the hall door stood her brother. No word was spoken; for the mighty wind lifted the roof and sides of the building from the foundation, and the boy and his sister were whirled around and around in the air, and cast in a heap on the ground, by an old well some two hundred feet distant.

Onward, with a mighty roar, the cyclone went on its victorious way.

The pretty village was but a plaything in the cyclone's mighty hand, and as such it played with, destroyed, and cast it away.

Suddenly it had come, and as suddenly the darkness of a still night settled down over the village as if nothing had happened.

Mr. Aron received a copy of the newspaper with a full account of the cyclone.

"O, help me, God!" he moaned. His wife had long ago been dead, and now Lola and Ned were gone to her.

Eight houses were destroyed and twelve unroofed, his among them. Only a table on the kitchen floor, and a lamp undisturbed on it, was left of his once happy home. Fourteen persons killed, and among them his loved children!

He took the first train for the village, and, with word to no one, he hurried to his former home. He had become a broken-hearted old man in one day.

There the remains of the house stood. But where the door had been was a great trunk of a

tree standing on edge, and a huge board plank had thrust itself, in some miraculous way, straight through the trunk.

Hush!—what was that coming across lots towards him, hand in hand as they used to do as children? Was he going mad, and only the phantom forms of his boy and girl coming to him? He passed a trembling hand across his hot brow.

On they came, and, when one of them placed a hand as real as his own into his, and two arms were put around his neck, he would have fallen but for his son's arms. As it was, he wept as a little child might weep when, after danger, it nestled at last in the mother's protecting arms. When he grew quieter, they told him how miraculous had been their escape.

That evening, as he asked the blessing for the simple fare he and his loved children shared through kindly friends, he prayed for those who had lost their loved ones. Now he knew that out of the fourteen reported killed, twelve were dead.

TONY AND FLUFFY.

A FABLE.

FLUFFY looked positively beautiful in her anger and surprise as she faced Tony, the unexpected pet of the family, to whom she was a new-comer.

Tony had consented readily to the proposal for a kitten in the household. He liked them, as a rule, unless he was neglected after their arrival.

He was a rather good-looking pug dog, if that term can be applied to a pug.

When Fluffy, the auburn-haired Angora kitten, spread her tail full sail and uttered a hiss, Tony replied:

"If you are for war, I'm afraid you must quarrel alone," and turning his back on the angry kitten, he marched away.

"Ah," said the kitten, "you are afraid to fight. I am very small and you are large, but my claws are sharp, and I know how to reach for your eyes, and you know I do."

Tony went to a corner and lay down, but said nothing. Puss followed, a dancing light of mischief and anger in her yellow-gray eyes.

"If you must have this place, I will leave," said the dog. "I am larger and would not hurt one so small. I have been taught to be good to kittens;

but if you continue to annoy me, I may forget and become a dog that would be ashamed of himself." With downcast tail, he arose and marched away.

"What a queer dog!" thought Fluffy. "I was told all dogs were cruel and dangerous, and taught that my claws and power to hiss were to be used on all dogs that I saw. Can it be that there is any good in a dog?"

While she washed her face, she meditated on this new problem. She eyed wonderingly the pug who was being fondled by two ladies.

"You dear, kind dog, and you spiteful little kitten," said one of them.

"You understand," explained Tony from a safe side of the room; "I've lived here eight years, and you have lived here three days. I think, when you have come to rob me of a share of my petting, that you might at least treat me kindly. We could become good friends, like a yellow kitten and I were at one time. He died, and I have missed him sorely."

Fluffy did not reply, but, still on her guard, she came slowly towards him until she stood in front of his mouth. Some way, his teeth looked so savage, and, being so close to him, he appeared so large, that, quite suddenly, Fluffy let forth a startling hiss. Tony was surprised; he had thought she was coming to him in friendship, and now angry thoughts rose in his heart.

"She deserves to be punished, the treacherous little animal!" said he to himself.

He had learned his lesson of self-control after many a hard experience, and Fluffy was still young and learning, so he was silent.

The first kitten that came to live in the same house with him he had fought. The result of the quarrel was his near-sighted eyes. The next time another cat came to live there, he had only barked angry retorts to her hissing remarks, and had danced about to frighten the kitten. The reward for his naughty behavior had been a severe slap from the hand of the mistress he adored. Now he had learned his lesson, and the little auburn cat whom he had hoped for a friend, having proved, much to his disappointment, to be a cross, treacherous animal, like many he had known in his youth, he was puzzled what to do. Her fur being auburn, he had reasoned that she would be of the same loving, confiding nature as his dead playmate, the yellow-striped kitten.

"He is a queer dog," said the kitten, as she lay down and looked at him.

"That is the way Fuzzy-wuzzy looked at me," he said in a kind, pleased tone.

"Indeed," answered the kitten. "Perhaps then I am mistaken, and there is some good in you."

Each day after that Pussy watched him closely, and discovered, to her surprise, that he did not chase other cats in the yard. To be sure, if the mistress petted her much, his eyes fairly popped out of his head with jealousy, and he drank all her milk if it were handy. At such times her doubts of his

having any good in him were fully aroused. When alone, however, she gradually found that she could drink milk out of the same dish with him, and at the same time enjoy a pleasant chat with him, or purr to her heart's content. Once he chased out of the yard a dog that had been running after her, and from then on her faith in him was strong. When they grew acquainted, the kitten said:

"Friend Tony, I was very lonely when I first came, and now I am most happy with you for company."

"Fluffy," answered the dog, "I was jealous of you at first; but now I find you are very pretty, and worthy, in more ways than one, of love. I also have been lonely, for I missed the dead kitten."

"Tell me about her," said Fluffy, and she came slowly toward the pug.

"Lay your head across my feet as she used to do, and I will put you to sleep with my story," said he.

"Instead of that, I will sing to you while you slumber," said puss, not to be outdone in kindness, "for you must be weary."

"Indeed we are both tired, so suppose we sleep," suggested the dog.

"How cunning! What a pretty picture!" said the two ladies, entering the kitchen a little later, and seeing the dog and cat.

Fluffy lay across the pug's feet and Tony lay with his head resting lovingly on Fluffy's soft fur. They seemed to hear nothing, but slept on in perfect content. The kitten purred gently in her sleep.

This fable teaches that one must look for the good in others, and not for the evil, and they will be surprised to discover how much they will find. Also to remember this saying:

“Two it takes to make a quarrel,
One can always end it.”

FATE OR PROPHECY.

A HORROR STORY.

THE old house looked as if, were it to speak, it might tell of strange deeds that had happened under its vine-covered walls.

People said the place was haunted; that an evil prophecy hung over all who should live there. Rumor whispered that, during the wars, a man had concealed himself there. From his hiding-place he had carried on a warfare as unusual and horrible as could be imagined; instead of fighting openly, he secretly handed out food so cleverly poisoned, that many of the soldiers died slow, strange deaths, for which no one could account. Numerous and terrible were the deeds that had taken place in this building.

At last it was stated that the man had died by accidentally tasting the food he had poisoned for others. When it was found that a rebel lived there, and he was suspected of poisoning the soldiers, men coming to take him found him dead. Now, the men said, his ghost walked the rooms of the house, moaning over the lives he had taken. Some brave deed might free him, and allow him to go at last to rest; but a sacrificed life, willingly given, was all that could do so. Thus ran the story.

An old man of the neighborhood had conversed

with this strange, white spirit of another world, and it had uttered curses on any who should live under those walls.

Some people believed that the old man had really conversed with the ghost; others lightly touched their foreheads and nodded wisely, but said nothing.

Nevertheless, stories or no stories, Helen Mayer, her two sisters, one brother, and her mother, had moved into the old ruin and fixed up the interior so that, in neatness and cleanliness, it appeared like a speck of Holland.

There were several reasons for their coming to live there; one was the fact that the landlord rented the place for almost nothing, being eager to have some one move in. It had been a most unprofitable place to own, since the stories of the curse had been spread abroad. The low rates were a great inducement; secondly, the family were not superstitious; thirdly, years ago the place had belonged to Helen's ancestors, and, as Helen said: "I do not think our ancestors will walk the earth, waiting to punish us."

As for the stories about the house being haunted, the family had no faith in them. No ghost had appeared to any of the family since their coming, and Helen laughed at the foolish talk of the neighborhood.

Only once did Helen confess to being nervous when thinking over the story. It was one evening while she and her sister sang, "Ah! cha la morte ognora, Miserere," from *Il Trovatore*, and a chill seemed to pass over her as she sang those sad words.

That night she drew the covers close over her head, and dared not open her eyes lest she behold the ghost of the house, and he threaten her with his horrid prophecy. From that time on Gladys, her younger sister, slept with her. Helen claimed that she had been over-tired, and thus more nervous than usual; but the music of that one part of the opera was never played or sung again by any of the family.

It was while living in this house that Helen met Reuben Harding, and a few blocks from there, on a hill overlooking the sea, Reuben told her his love.

He had been East on important business the last few months; but to-day he was to arrive, and in three weeks Helen was to be his bride.

"Then," she said to her mother, "I will prove to the villagers how foolish is their prophecy of the haunted house. However, should anything happen, it would be fate, that's all," continued Helen.

"But people would call it the prophecy of the ghost," answered her mother.

"We fear nothing, mother," laughed Helen.

So, since her lover was coming, although the heavens wept, Helen's heart was full of sunshine.

A quick step on the walk, the sound of a hearty, manly voice, and, before many moments, Helen was held close in her lover's arms.

The whole family were pleased to have Reuben with them. The first week after his coming passed so swiftly and happily that, for the time being, they nearly forgot the ghost story.

By the middle of the second week Helen had grown nervous and irritable, because as her wedding-day grew nearer people talked continually of the horrid prophecy. Perhaps her nervousness or the rainy morning had made both the lovers feel disagreeable; at least, they got into a heated discussion on some rather important subject, and the result was a quarrel, and Helen was both angry and grieved because she found Reuben was no broader than the general run of mankind, and she had ever placed him on a pedestal and worshiped him.

Shortly after dinner, as the sunshine had come out, Helen stole silently from the house. She decided she would go and rest on the hill, near the cliff that overlooked the sea, where first she and Reuben had told their love for each other. Perhaps the influence of olden times might heal her wounded spirit.

When she reached the place she found her tiny sister, Gladys, already there gathering flowers. Helen felt uneasy as she caught sight of the child, for Gladys had never ventured here alone before.

"Gladys," she said, "you must never come here alone; never, Pet; for the cliff is not a safe place. Promise me, dearie!"

Gladys looked up from the lovely violets she had gathered to the violet eyes above her, and then to the flowers that grew to the very edge of a large rock overlooking the sea, before she answered; then she said:

"All right, sister; but do bring me here often. I

think it 's so pretty, and I do love to pick violets." Then, after a pause, as Helen did not answer, Gladys said, "Reuben will bring me if I ask him." Then in surprise, "Where 's Reuben?"

"Never mind, Gladys," said Helen, lifting the child into her lap as she seated herself on the grass. "What lovely flowers you have gathered!"

"Yes," answered the little girl. "Half are for you, and half are for Reuben. I love Reuben. Where 's Reuben?"

Helen smothered the question by a kiss on the rosy lips, and then, placing her on the ground, she walked over to the edge of the cliff.

Below the water foamed, dashed, and roared as its spray struck high on the rocky, rough side of the cliff.

As Helen looked down at it she shuddered. The prophecy flashed through her mind, and it seemed as if some grim vision had threatened, with untimely hand, to toss all she loved and cared for into the cruel water below. How cold it seemed to grow, although now the sun shone brightly. What a strange chill filled her heart!

"It is dreadful here," she sighed. "Gladys, come, let 's go home."

Suddenly the sun was hidden by a black cloud, and Helen shivered; the sun would shine soon, and then things would be less dismal.

How could she ever have thought this place beautiful? How could love ever have blossomed in such a place?

She suddenly wished her lover's arms were about her. Perhaps Reuben was right and she was wrong. Anyway, what did it matter who was right, if she and Reuben loved each other? Why let this difference of opinion matter? That they loved each other, for her woman's soul was now enough.

She roused herself from her reverie, to look about and wonder why Gladys had not put her small, plump hand in hers when she called.

As she turned to look for the child she heard a cry, fierce and terrible, ring out on the clear air; it was a child's scream full of fear.

Helen's heart seemed to stop beating, and then, catching sight of Gladys some distance from her, she rushed towards her without a word, lest by speaking she should happen to startle the child; and if Gladys moved she knew she would be lost.

Gladys's bright eyes had caught sight of a bunch of more beautiful flowers than she clutched in her tiny hands. These fairer posies were on the edge of the rock, and, in trying to get them, she had slipped and now hung, over the deep abyss, by the thin dress which had caught over the point of the rough rock.

Before Helen could reach her little sister, a strong man rushed past her.

"Reuben!" she screamed, in a tone of relief and love.

"Darling, stay back!" he called, and with these words reached Gladys.

The thin gown gave way; Reuben's foot slipped,

—a shriek: the sound of hungry waves, and then silence.

Suddenly, grinning at Helen, was the ghost of a man, thin and gaunt, with dark spots beneath his eyes, that looked as if he had spent many sleepless nights. With one hand he pointed to the water, but his face was turned towards hers.

“My curse, my prophecy, and now my rest,” his hollow voice said.

The very wind of the approaching storm seemed to toss these words over and over again to her. With a shriek Helen rushed towards the rock, but the grim figure, so white and motionless, spoke. “Not you,” it said, and stretched one thin, bony arm towards her.

She stopped and gazed with wide eyes, full of fear, at the ghostly figure. Long she stood, as silent as a statue carved of white marble, seeming unconscious of the storm that suddenly broke forth in all its fury.

Suddenly Helen uttered a cry that rose high above the storm, and then a fierce laugh, loud and long. It was the laugh of a mind lost to the world.

ORIGINAL FAIRY STORY OF COLONIAL TIMES.

IN the old Colonial times, if you remember rightly, there were thought to be such things as witches. Now there were also beings called fairies, good and bad ; but they were seldom seen, and were never brought to trial before the people.

Pensive, the child whom I am going to tell you about, was the first to find out this truth, that there were fairies. She was the granddaughter of one of the old Puritans who came over in the ship *Abigail* with John Endicott, in 1625, and was the most devout of little Puritans, loving her humble church.

It was on the First Day, which is now always called Sunday, when Pensive sat in her quiet home with her head bent forward, resting on her clasped hands.

"I wonder," mused she, "if Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn are really witches?"

"By no means," cried a mad, shrill voice ; "but I can make them witches."

Pensive looked up with a very startled face, and was more amazed than ever on beholding at her feet a sturdy little man, in a long green coat, and hat with a large green feather in it.

"Oh, Oh!" roared the little man, slapping his

tiny fat hand on his plump knee, "you're thinking I'm a witch, are you?"

"I'm sure," replied our little Puritan maiden, "I don't know what to think, but I know I'd never dare tell mother I saw you, or she'd think I was a witch and I had seen the devil."

"Not a very good compliment," answered the little man; "but I can assure you I make a very good one;" and with that he suddenly threw off his green cap and cloak and stood before her. Two huge horns stood out from his head in a threatening manner. He wore a most brilliant suit of red; his tiny fingers looked like sharp claws, and, laughing like some frightful demon, he danced at her feet. He was no taller than the length of her hand, yet she feared him, and would have screamed if she could; but some unknown power kept her from it.

"I'm only a bad fairy," said he, in a tone that was so sharp it pierced like a sword; but our devout young maiden, with wonderful courage, decided to find out about him now she had the opportunity.

"How did you get here?" questioned she.

"O, dear!" roared he, "why I crawled through the keyhole."

"You may call yourself a fairy, but I call you an evil spirit," was our maiden's brave reply.

"Either pleases me," said he; "but listen! How would you like to go with me to my land and live?"

"O, never!" almost screamed Pensive.

"Mine is better," whispered a sweet little voice, and Pensive, looking about to see where it came

from, beheld a tiny being no larger than the little man, but beautiful beyond words.

"I am the good fairy called Peace," she whispered in a soft, singing voice. "My home is beautiful beyond mortal visions of glory. My home, child, if I take you there, will be a place of joy to you. But I should change your form and make you like myself, only smaller, for I am queen of my bright land."

"You are very fair," cried the child; "but I could not leave my people and change. No, no, I can not go! But I would rather go with you than with him," she said, shuddering.

"Well, you would, would you?" said the red fairy. "If she is queen of one land, I am king of another; and I shall punish you for this, and make people think you are a witch. Ha, ha!"

"Do all you will," cried the bright fairy Peace. "I can save her. I am good, and the good always win in the end."

With these words both disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared, and Pensive was left weak and trembling.

"Are you ill, child?" asked her mother, kindly.

"I fear I have a little headache," said Pensive, not daring to reveal her vision, or whatever it was she had seen.

About a week later little Cramer, one of her boy friends, and the son of one of the most popular men of the times, came for a visit to her home. He remained several days, and Pensive told him of her

dream, as she had come to think it must have been. They kept the secret between themselves, and again and again, when alone, they would discuss it.

Now, it happened that one day these two children were playing with a child, named Margaret, who was suddenly stung by a bee. Pensive and Cramer tried to take the child home, but she struggled so that they had to give it up.

"What shall we do, Cramer?" asked Pensive.

"I don't know. She is so frantic with pain, I wonder if it was an evil spirit," answered Cramer.

Hearing the screams a crowd had gathered, and catching the words "evil spirit," they cried with one voice,

"A witch! A witch!"

Margaret's mother grasped Pensive savagely by the arm, saying:

"I have several times, since Margaret has been playing so much with this girl, seen that strange things have happened. Why, only yesterday she picked up a peculiar stone, and when she handed it to me it changed into a black bird, and flew out of the window."

"I, too," said Cramer's mother, "have noticed that my son has acted queerly and been made to talk and cry in his sleep. Indeed she must be a witch."

"No, O no!" cried Cramer, "she is as pure and harmless as you are, mother."

"See," cried the crowd. "She even now makes him tell an untruth."

Poor Pensive was pale as death, and in her heart

wished she might die at once; but death does not come in answer to such wishes. She was taken and tried, and found guilty, as were all who were once accused. So, as was the fashion in the old Colonial times, her hands were tied to her feet, and she was thrown into the water. With a wild scream Cramer rushed from those who were holding him, and leaped in after her. They both seemed about to sink when suddenly a bright, beautiful, tiny being cried in a voice that only these two sinking children heard.

“Let blindness descend upon all this multitude.”

Then she touched the now floating boy and girl with her golden wand, and instantly they became smaller than her lovely self; and taking them by the hand she uttered a low whistle, and a lovely white bird flew towards them, and Peace, clasping them close in her arms, mounted the bird, which bore them to Fairy-land.

“Awake,” cried Peace, and the multitude opened their darkened eyes, and not seeing Cramer or Pensive floating, concluded they had drowned two innocent children. For, indeed, in those times to float was a sign of guilt, while to be drowned was indicative of innocence. But the little ones were carried away to Fairy-land, where Peace reigned as queen. The people in that lovely dream-land welcomed their small guests with joy, and crowned their heads with beautiful flowers.

The fairy queen, Peace, received a message from the bad fairy to come and have a battle with him for the possession of the children. The battle was

to be held in the air above the place where the children were supposed to have been drowned. The Red King came down on his black bird (the bird that had been instrumental in doing so much evil); Peace came on her white-winged messenger (for all fairies used birds when going any distance). Peace held in her hand her golden wand, while the bad king carried an ebony one. These were their only weapons in their duel. The water rose and boiled below as the battle raged. Each aimed to strike the other with their wand, and so get them in their power. At last it was over, for Peace's golden rod had struck the fat little hand of the king, and his wand dropped from it instantly.

"You are in my power," she cried, "you who have for years whispered evil thoughts to the little children in so many lands. You have changed yourself into bees, stones, and birds, so that the children have been led to make false accusations, and brought sorrow and misery into many homes. Yes, the witchcraft began with the children, and you were the evil genius who caused it all. It was a fatal moment for you when you showed yourself to Pensive, my little enemy."

"Little," he cried, furiously.

"Yes, little; for you are little now in strength as I am great. Now, in punishment for your deeds, and that witchcraft shall be no more, I shall call to the sea-maids and they shall bear you beneath the water, where you shall die."

"O Peace, pardon, pardon!" he wailed; but she

had already sounded her whistle and two beautiful sea-maidens came up from the deep, rough water. Their hair floated about their shoulders lightly, and sparkled with the spray. Peace gave them her orders, and, with wild groans, the Red King was carried below the waves, never to rise again. As with him witchcraft originated, so with him it died. The brave queen rode back to her fairy home on her white bird, and greeted with joy the two happy children.

The people in Salem saw the storm on the water, and shook their heads with meaning, although they knew not its cause.

A CHILD OF MUSIC.

A BOARDING-SCHOOL STORY.

TWO O'CLOCK, and her lesson still unprepared. Lucy had a spell of what she termed "the dumps." Cecil Ron's mother had just arrived, and, in a slight way, Lucy was reminded of her mother, whose dearly loved face she had not seen for two years. Now, as she sat sadly with her German book on her lap, her mind wandered back to the days before her mother had traveled abroad. There had been much saving and numerous ways tried to get enough for the trip, which was to make her mother a well woman. Lucy had gone without many a necessary article for the sake of her mother, but never for one moment would she let her dear mother guess that to be the case.

Somewhere in Lucy's nature was a vein of mischief. It was not willfulness, only an overflow of healthy spirits; but this worried her mother very much. Try as she would, Lucy could not be good more than two days; then somewhere her wild spirit would take wing.

Help came to the family in the shape of money from her mother's wealthy relations in the old country. It was then decided to send Lucy away to school during the two years her mother would be gone. Arold, her elder sister, felt fully equal to the

care of the younger ones ; but she was glad to get enough money added to that her relations sent to them, to send both her mother and Lucy away. Much as she loved her small sister, she felt the constant care of her too great a responsibility, and so the merry young maiden had suddenly found herself, one rainy day, in a large building full of corridors and rooms in which she heard and saw merry or sad faces as the case might be, between already homesick girls and the old ones who felt at home since they had already become acquainted with the school.

Lucy was very fond of music, but this was given under extra charge, which she was at present unable to pay. Once a month she heard from her mother, who was growing stronger, and who had the best of care from her brother's family.

When Lucy, with tears, had bade good-bye to her mother, she made some good resolutions, and determined to be good all the while her mother was away, and, after learning the school rules, she decided to obey them all, so her mother would have such favorable reports of her work and conduct that she would not worry. For Lucy to perform this reform in herself seemed beyond her. She hated her German and her literature, and although she liked mathematics and got along fairly well in it, still she often forgot to study it because some mischief had been planned. She went to midnight spreads, at the same time telling herself that she must not go. One might think, by doing these

things, that she did not love her mother; for deeds, they say, speak louder than words. Still Lucy did love her mother, and she shed bitter tears after her spell of mischief was over. Her deportment roll was poor, and her lessons were so badly prepared that she was never on the "honor roll," which gave girls special privileges.

The teachers did not understand her; but the pupils loved her, because when with them she was always bright and happy, in for any fun, and kind to each and every one. Her dresses were few, and, when once torn, remained so until some wise teacher made her sit down and mend them.

There was one thing, however, which no one noticed, and that was her intense love of music. They knew it made her quiet and seemingly sad, and they therefore felt she did not love it; so this nature of hers, so opposite and yet so strange a combination, puzzled many.

There was one person that Lucy loved with a devotion almost equal to that for her mother; this was the vocal teacher, and it was always after a talk with her that Lucy would have one of her rare good spells, when no one could persuade her to do wrong.

It was on this mournful day, when Lucy sat with her unprepared German lesson in her lap, that she received word that if she could not behave she must be sent home. Is it strange that the German letters in her book turned upside down, and seemed to dance upon the page before her, as her deep black eyes filled with tears? Suddenly an idea suggested

itself to her, and she arose slowly from her chair. It was Monday, their holiday, and she knew Miss Ronald would be in her room reading. With hurried steps she went to Miss Ronald's room.

"Miss Ronald," she said, eagerly opening the door. "Will you please sing for me?"

Miss Ronald's eyes were red with weeping, and Lucy, seeing this, went to her and put her brown head on her lap, while she said gently, as she looked up into her face.

"Why are you sad? Is it because—because I made you?"

"Yes, dear," said Miss Ronald. "To think that two more marks will send you away, and your dear mother will then have to know; and how it will grieve her! I did not know you were so selfish as well as naughty."

Lucy's spirit was proud; she had never in her life said that she was sorry, and now for a moment her eyes filled with tears; then she looked at the face of the teacher she loved, but whom she had never told of her affection. She had often said to herself that she was not worth having her like her. Now she quickly jumped up and walked to the door.

"Miss Ronald, I'm sorry!" she cried, and was gone.

She fled swiftly down the hall to the now vacant practice rooms, and hastened into one of them. She had never dared go there before for fear some one would laugh at her; for since no one had taught her, she knew nothing of music. She sat down by

the instrument, and for a moment her fingers idly ran over the keys. Suddenly her cheeks flushed red, and she began to play. It was a piece she had heard her teacher play, and now, with infinite tenderness, she played it. Then at first softly, then more loudly, she began to sing. The voice was a rare one, even in its uncultured state. There was a deep richness, full of strength and sweetness in it. Untrained, it was like the song of some wild song-bird longing for freedom. She stopped playing, and sang it over again. Suddenly she paused, and began to play. The piece was like a part of her own nature; she had never heard it except in her own heart. Sometimes her poor little untaught fingers almost got entangled with one another, and often she played several notes with one finger, but the piece was full of a strange longing. When she had finished she began to sob, and between each sob she spoke:

“O, if I could only learn, only learn—then I could be good always! I had to play to-day; otherwise I would have gotten into a scrape. Ah, you dear old piano, I love you, and I wish I could sing to you just like Miss Ronald. Then I’d tell her just how I love her, and I’d be good, O so good; for you would keep me so. O mother, mother, I want to be good!”

Lucy was often in the habit of speaking to herself, and now as she laid her head lovingly on the old piano she spoke to it as to a human being. She had not heard the door open; she had not seen standing there Miss Ronald, Mr. Fay, the instrumental teacher, and Miss Fayer, the principal; but they had

stood there ever since the second time she had sung the song. They stood as if petrified. Was this Lucy, the dumbest pupil in the school, the merry, mischievous, unruly, and spoiled? As the girl still wept, and lay with bowed head on the keys, Miss Ronald came close to her.

"Lucy," she said, gently, and Lucy looked up in surprise and fear. Had she heard her poor playing, and would she scold her? She felt that she could not bear that now.

Both the teachers asked her how she had learned to play, and whether she had made up the last piece she played.

"I watched others play when I had the chance," said Lucy. "As for the last piece, why, that just came out of my fingers. I felt like that, you know, and that is why I made it up. I can not read music—for I do not know how—but I guess I play from ear."

They assured her that she ought to make a composer if she would study.

Lucy's face was one of intense surprise. "I—I have longed—I—" she breathed. Then she spoke hurriedly: "If I could earn money and take lessons, why, O Miss Ronald, I could be good." It was the old hungry cry of her heart. "I have to vent my spirit some way, and I do not have a chance to do so this way usually."

She asked no questions as to why they had come to find her, and they did not tell her the reason.

A few weeks later, Miss Ronald took up the in-

struction of Lucy free of charge, and Mr. Fay did also. The exercises were tiresome at first to her; for she longed to play pieces and express her thoughts in her own way on the piano. The fingering was hard to learn, but so dearly did she love her music that she worked faithfully, and soon came to understand how to read quickly from the music-book. She was as jolly as ever, but her mischief was all innocent, and she broke no rules. When she felt her old spells of unruliness coming on, she would sit at the piano and play until she had subdued her wild spirit. Her vocal improvement in three months was marvelous. Sad to say, she got along little better in her studies, and would have entirely neglected them, but she feared Miss Ronald would feel hurt, and she felt gratitude and love for both her teachers for their kindness in giving her lessons.

When, in two more years, her mother came home, it was to come to her child's recital, and to hear one of the most marvelous child voices she had ever had an opportunity to hear. Lucy also played a number of her own compositions.

Years later she repaid her kind friends for their kindness to her in her poverty. She became one of the most accomplished singers and players. She was ever childish in many ways, and remained so until her death.

Had she lived, who knows with what sweet melodies the world might have rung, melodies straight from so loving a heart? Among those few who knew her best she is loved and revered as "a Child of Music."

A TRIAL AT ENTERTAINING.

A DRAMATIC STORY.

MR. AREN had called on her sister, and, after announcing to Jennie his arrival, Elsie took him into the parlor as she was bidden to do.

"Sister will be down in a few minutes," the small child smiled sympathetically at the young man whose question she had answered. "Just take a chair, sir," pointing to a soft-cushioned seat. "Sister has been expecting you ever since last night. She scarcely slept at all because her kids on her head hurt her; but her hair always looks better after she has curled it on kids. She looks awful when she has them on, though. Please do be seated, and I'll sit on this stool."

At this moment there was a decided exclamation from the young man, who, on sitting down, had fallen through to the floor. There was revealed a broken chair over the seat of which had been placed the soft cushion. The man seated himself on a sofa, and looked reprovingly at the child.

"Did you do this?" he asked.

"I'm so sorry. Maybe Ted did it; he's full of pranks, you know."

Elsie felt perfectly safe in this statement, for had not she and Ted planned to lay the blame on each other so neither could be proved guilty?

Elsie set about to entertain her visitor; but her freckled face looked much like a dried apple as she tried to keep from laughing at Ted, who was in a safe hiding-place behind the big sofa, and who continually made faces for her amusement.

"Sister told me a fairy story last night about a man who loved a princess, but a prince came and married her. I think you must have been the man, because I heard her tell mother you loved her. Why did you leave so quickly last night? Mamma said she found ten pins in the sofa where you sat down just a minute before you left. I wonder who put them there? If sister had found them on her side of the sofa, she'd said we did it."

The young man remained silent cursing his little entertainer as a nuisance. Fred crept almost out of his hiding-place to get a good look at Mr. Aren, and only hastily resumed it at a warning gesture from Elsie.

"Sister says I do n't know how to entertain anybody, but I bet I do. She says always to talk on the subject the person is most interested in, and that's what I'm doing. Ain't you most interested in sister?"

As the young man, with a bored expression, did not reply to her question, she added:

"I never thought you were bashful before, but it seems like the cat's got your tongue. Sister says one ought not to do all the talking; but if you do n't say anything how can I help it? Sister told me that she was going to marry a rich man, and then she'd

let mother have lots of things she's always wanted. She said you were as poor as a church mouse. I heard her through the keyhole."

"Did you not know that was a very wrong and wicked thing to do?" he asked, sternly.

"Please do n't preach at me. I'm nine, and have lots to learn. Sister says she wishes you were n't so religious. If you scold her as you do me, I do n't blame her a bit for not liking it. Mother says sister ought to marry a rich man because she's so extravagant. Did you tell Jennie last night that you loved her? She came up stairs, and I heard her crying last night, and mother said to father that she guessed you had popped the question. What does that mean?"

"It's something children should not know about," he answered.

Elsie felt snubbed, and was silent some time; then she added:

"I wish you'd do it when I'm here. Do you know Tom Thames? He is a dandy, for he gave us lots of candy. He asked Jennie to marry him; but of course she did not, for he's awful poor, and she is going to marry a rich man. He used to go with her. After you left last night, Jack Adams came to call, and I guess he loves Jennie also. Boys always do, and Jennie says she can marry whom she likes, and mother says she better pick out a rich man because she's a born society girl."

"Did you hear this all at a keyhole?"

Elsie nodded to this.

"Sister says you're awful homely; but if your nose was not crooked, and you were taller, and your hair was not red like mine, you would be all right. But don't you care; I don't, and they say I'm awfully homely. I guess you're not as poor as she says, either, because you get us lots of candy and toys, and every dime counts; so mother says when I ask her to give me one."

Elsie had been so interested in what she was saying that she forgot to look at the young man or at Ted, who was unusually quiet.

Mr. Aren was looking anxiously towards the door, and he now muttered, almost beneath his breath, something to the effect that he could only stay a little while, as he was to take the five o'clock train to New York, at which Elsie glanced up and saw a frown on her listener's face.

"Would you like me to call her, then?" asked Elsie. "I thought I'd make you have a nice time, but I guess I've not;" and her lips trembled.

"Here child, don't cry. You tell her about the train I must make. Excuse my hasty departure to her, and you and Ted will find in the hall on the hat-rack a bag of candy."

Elsie smacked her lips. "O say," she said, "I'm awful sorry about that chair. You're awfully good," and she rushed to him and gave him a bear hug. "I guess Ted has gone some place, but I'll eat a little now."

She glanced hastily towards where Ted with eager ears sat listening.

"No, you do n't!" he cried. "You bet I'll have some too," and the astonished young man saw a small fat boy appear from behind the sofa, and vanish as quickly as a flash, followed by the red-haired Elsie.

"No, you do n't; only half is n't it, Mr. Aren?" called Elsie; but she did not wait for an answer.

Just then a young girl entered the room. There was nothing especially attractive about her appearance; but a determined chin, a high forehead, and clear gray eyes showed that here stood a girl of intellect and fine character. The young man arose to meet her.

"I just heard that you were going away. I'm sorry I could not get down sooner."

"It's four-forty," he said. "I can just barely make the train." He glanced about uneasily and avoided looking fully into the face of the girl; but as she looked down at the floor and moved nervously one foot about, he gave one swift glance at the face of the girl he had thought he loved. Just then Elsie and Ted, with large sticks of candy in their hands, appeared in the doorway.

"Look, Jennie, what he has brought us!" said Elsie. "I guess he's not as poor as a church mouse now, and I just like him lots; and he brought some toys as a surprise—he did!"

But for a warning light in the gray eyes there is no knowing what might have happened; but Elsie and Ted fled to escape all danger.

A laughing, understanding look was in the gray eyes turned to Mr. Aren.

"When I told mother of your love for me, I also told her last night what you said about being so poor in worldly wealth and so homely in looks, and poor little Elsie has heard part, but not all."

The young man was looking at her with a puzzled expression.

"I said," continued the girl, "that even if you were, as you expressed it, as poor as a church mouse and homely, I'd rather marry you than the handsomest man alive or one as rich as a king. Must you go to New York?"

The train left for New York at five, and the voices were still talking in the parlor at six.

MRS. ASBORN, THE VILLAGE GOSSIP.

A DIALECT AND BURLESQUE STORY.

"I AIN'T never seed anybody like that there new-comer," remarked Mrs. Asborn at the sewing circle. "Well, seein' as your all so interested, I 'll tell ye all about him. He wears a tall hat, somethin' like a stovepipe and black as a coal-bucket, and he carries a cane that can't do him no good, seein' as it 's about as thin as a willow twig. Then them spectacles he wears,—My!"

Mrs. Asborn laid her sewing on her lap, and as she put a few pins in her mouth she paused to see whether they were enough interested in her story for her to continue.

"What about the glasses? I suppose they surprised you," said young Mrs. Armstrong, who had just returned from a trip to Berry, a small village about sixteen miles from the one in which she lived.

Mrs. Armstrong was supposed to be quite well off, having from her father the homestead, including some land and a large, comfortable barn and shed for cattle. She had, besides these, two good cows, two strong field horses, and a drove of sheep, as well as a fine dog to guard them. Indeed, what else could she desire? Then, too, Elsie, her sister and her only companion (for she was a widow) at

her home, had a piano, and not another person in the village had anything but an organ on which to play the Sunday hymns. Thus it happened that all the village looked at her with devoted interest whenever she made a remark. It was seldom that Mrs. Armstrong made a remark, and those she made were seldom wise ones; still her silence left the impression that she knew more about things than she cared to say.

"Well, them glasses were a sparklin' in the sun like costly jewels, and I declare I believe they were solid gold," resumed Mrs. Asborn.

She pushed her own higher on her nose (they were not even silver), and then spent several minutes carefully taking the pins from her mouth and pinning together the two sides of the skirt on which she was sewing. One might think the pins in her mouth would have prevented speech; but no, not even sleep put a stop to her kindly chatter. At least this is the statement the villagers made.

"What 's he doing here?" asked Elsie, Mrs. Armstrong's pretty sister.

"He 's come for some mischief, you may make up your mind," said Miss Phillips, an old maid of about forty.

"Yes," resumed Mrs. Asborn, "and I do n't like the looks o' him anyway. I ain't feared for Sally, nor Ann neither, but Betsy Jane's head is like to be turned with all his finery. Why, them close must a cost him a sight o' money, if they cost him a cent."

"That 's true, that 's true," murmured Grandpa

Phillips, at whose house they were enjoying the sewing bee.

Grandpa always came in when it met here, because he was the oldest gentleman in the village and liked to be with the young people.

"That man's comin' reminds me of the time Villa Green disappeared," said Mrs. Asborn.

"You see it was this way," she continued. "Villa Green was a livin' all so happy like with her mother. Then she was enjoyin' Peter White's friendly company, and him a fine man, son of Saul White, as lived in Sheffield for four and twenty years, and never was heard to do nothin' but square dealin's with his neighbors. Well," threading her needle, "as I was a sayin', she was mighty happy, and Patsy Perkins, her as had no weddin'-cake, was Villa Green's neighbor."

"I never did like the looks of Patsy," interposed one of the ladies.

Mrs. Asborn continued: "Well, that man, Jacksonville Thornton Araban—what he wants of so long a name, and him so small to bear its weight, I can't reckon—reminds me of Jeferey Alexander Downson who fell in love with Villa; for 'deed he did fall in love with her almost at first sight. Yes, an' Villa, she fell in love with him. So they ran away and married. Well, he and she came back here, and poor Peter White grew as thin as a stick, and just looked like a shadder after he heard they was married. Then that man Villa married went off, and people said he was killed in a duel. Might

ha' known he was a queer person to fight them in these days. We asked Peter, bein' as he was the chief friend o' Villa, to break the news to her. When he did she just stared at him, her poor face all drawn and white like, and then, with never a 'thank you,' the poor soul went into the house and never came out."

"'Most as interesting as Romeo and Juliet that Daisy told me about," cried Elsie. "Whatever became of Villa?"

"The girl Villa was never seen after that, until, all sudden like, once we found the front door open and her gone. Where she went no one knows; but they say her spirit haunts the house now, and she is always cryin' as if she was awful sad."

"Well, if there ain't Jane Lindey," broke in grandpa, as the door opened and a pretty young girl entered. Then he added, with a sly wink: "You thought you had all the news to tell, but I bet I have the best and most interesting," and he held his pipe in silence, gazing at its smoke.

"Tell us," they all cried, as they began to put up their sewing, while Miss Phillips departed for the kitchen, and the ladies proceeded to lay the table with a white cloth and deck themselves with aprons. Grandpa continued (Jane had entered and stood by his side):

"Jane here," holding her hand in his, "is to marry Mr. Jacksonville Thornton Araban, and go to the city to live. And if there he ain't!" and the man with the gold glasses appeared in the door-

way. Jane ran to meet him, and all hurried to offer their congratulations.

Sleigh-bells were heard, and the sound of gay, young voices. A group of boys and girls, from fourteen years old and upward, came in. All put on aprons, and the "sugaring off" commenced. No one but those who have tasted it can imagine how good the maple-sugar, melted and placed on the cold snow, is when they are sugaring off.

"Say," whispered Mrs. Asborn, as she prepared to leave after the rest of the guests had departed, "He ain't at all like a dude, be he? Guess he'll make Jane a fine husband. My! but he's a dandy! I tell you if you ain't careful you never can tell a good person when you see one. But as I told you, I knowed he was a man worth knowin' the minute I set eyes on him. Shame he's goin' to the city to live. But as I was a sayin', he's fine! Just as soon as I set eyes on them glasses, I put him in the first row of society, and decided to invite him to Kit's garden party, and to the Church social, both of which occur next week, or, if it rains, they are to be the week after, you know."

She departed murmuring, "As I was a sayin'," and the last I heard was—"set eyes on them glasses."

WHEN THE WAYS ARE THREE.

AN ALLEGORY.

IN a place at the foot of a mountain called Life was born a boy. About the cradle of the child stood many women, each ready to give the infant a gift.

One with black, sparkling eyes and laughing face drew near the sleeping child, and laid her hand on the child's lips, and then silently disappeared. Another woman, with a high forehead and a long, straight line of health on her beautifully shaped hand, touched the baby's brow, and likewise left the room in silence. Still another came. No fairy of ancient lore could have had feet more shapely and beautiful. Gracefully she glided towards the sleeping infant, and gently touched the tiny baby's feet. Another passed by the child, and took in her large hands those of the child. There was nothing remarkable in her appearance, and so she passed by, almost unnoticed by the child's mother. When the women had all departed, the mother asked:

"What did they give as gifts from the gods to my little one?"

The nurse replied: "The first gave him wit; the second, intellect and great wisdom; the third, fleetness of foot and grace in dancing; and the fourth put skill into the boy's hands."

Thus the boy grew to youth, and had climbed a fair way on the pathway of life. Although he was young and possessed such noble gifts of the gods, he was restless. Many of those he passed on the way were less favored than he, and they wearied him. The trivial talk of the multitude passing him on the road up Life's mountain disgusted him, for he felt he was superior to all people he met.

He had walked one broad road until now, but here the path stretching beyond him merged into three. He sat down in front of them to decide which to take. As he sat there he saw an ant-hill by his side. Disgusted, he destroyed the hill nearest him, and, if he had not been lazy, the whole ant city would have faded from view. A tiny ant, carrying a heavy spider three times its own size, stopped suddenly on its way, as if to ask why its home had been ruined.

The boy was idly curious, and wondered vaguely why so small a thing carried so large a load. The ant turned from his course, and, with its burden, slowly wended its way to the opening of another ant-hill.

"I should think they would grow weary working," thought the boy.

As he watched them work, he wondered why these small ants seemed so congenial to each other. What had they in common? Then, angry at himself, he laughed scornfully, and arose and trod the little dwelling beneath his feet. He thought sadly:

"I am here puzzling which path of three to take.

I have passed my boyhood, and now enter my youth. How tiny the ants are, and how large my foot," and his heart was heavy with a strange longing as he saw the ants that were left bravely lift a burden and start away.

As he stood, wearily wondering which path to take, he saw three women drawing near him. One was a gay, pretty-faced woman, whose attitude seemed to speak of self-satisfaction. She reached him first.

"Ah, sir," she said, "I am Pleasure and Conceit combined, and with my whole heart I wish to welcome you up the left pathway. You can have gay times with me as your friend. If some fall by the way, it will not grieve you, for I will teach you that it matters little who falls so that you, the wisest and wittiest and best, live on."

From the other side path there came a tall woman clothed in scarlet.

"Listen to me," she cried out loudly, and took the youth's other hand.

"I am called Vice, and am sister to Pleasure. You have never tasted of the sweet drink I can give you. You have drunk deeply, however, of what my sister, Pleasure Conceit, has in her place. My home is full of fascination and pleasure. There are dangers to be crossed and conquered."

"And the end, the end of the pathway you two women would lead me by?" he questioned, for he was a wise youth.

"We do not go that far," said they; "live for

to-day's good times, and into the to-morrow you must go alone."

"With no lamp?" he cried.

"Yes, with no lamp; but, boy, think of the gay to-day," said they.

As he stood hesitating and the longing still unsatisfied, a woman from the central path came towards him.

She was very small and beautiful to look upon. The purity of her white gown seemed written in the sweet expression of her face.

"You are longing for something, but you do not know what you want," she said, softly.

"That is true," he answered. "Who are you?"

"I bear many names," she said, with a smile: "Virtue, Sympathy, and Love. Into my home I gladly would welcome you. It is very beautiful; yet to reach its end you must struggle over many hard places. On the road thither you will see sorrow, and learn how to comfort others. To have a field of good corn, you must till the land; to have flowers, you must enrich the soil; to have friends, you must do good deeds for them. Nothing is had in my land without work; but O, the result of the labor! I must first give you a gift, which was given you, and you have idly cast away or else lost, and have never sought or longed for since. It is no wonder that this greatest gift was lost, since you have ever walked with Conceit. You are old enough now to know which path to follow. There is much for you to learn; but do not get discouraged, but, like the

ants, go bravely on working, no matter what causes you harm. I give you a heart to understand your faults and virtues, and the good of others. Will you take it?"

The two women held his hands tightly. "If you accept, you can not go with me!" each cried.

He did not heed them, but left them and stood by Virtue's side.

"Whither does the Mountain of Life end if I go by your path?" he said.

"We do not know," she answered. "But we are sure it is not dark or lonely, for we have a lamp on the way."

"And what may the light be?" he said, as he followed his future guide. "Can we take it beyond, when we reach the end and enter the Great Unknown?"

Fearful of the answer, Vice and Conceited Pleasure fled from sight.

"The light lasts always; it will never go out."

Then they heard dimly the sweet voice say:

"The light is what we call Godlike Love."

SHUFFLING ALONG.

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

AN uncertain shuffle, a heavy cough, and a low, unpleasant laugh were sure to announce the approach of Joseph Hackley.

He had lived most of his life in the small town, and had spent the largest share of his time, from boyhood to manhood, in front of the town stores or the livery stables. He seemed to enjoy life in his peculiar way, and although he was now far past middle age his skill in swimming was marvelous to those younger.

"It 'pears as if it would rain to-morrow," was his usual greeting to an anxious farmer.

Clouds had no share in introducing this remark, only the feeling of solid comfort it brought into the heart of Joseph.

"I had hoped to get the hay in before another storm came," replied Farmer Jones, as Joseph made his unwelcome remark. "It does not look like rain to me."

"Were you too busy this morning to notice the red glow in the east? It is a sure sign of rain; I never knew it to fail. Then, my rheumatism is hurting my feet, and it tells a straight truth of rain."

When Farmer Jones told this to his wife, she said: "I should think you would cease to ask Joseph

Hackley anything. I suppose he will stay to dinner to-day, and, with the washing and Sallie's dress to finish, it's more than my share to have gloomy, shuffling Joseph as company to-day."

Joseph, however, did stay to dinner. It was his habit to visit all the different people of the town, who, out of pity for his poverty, and believing him to be feeble-minded, fed him and joyfully bade him good-bye at the end of the day. They were sorry for his old mother, and some of them loved his young wife, to whom he had been most kind despite his peculiarities. She had been dead now over a year.

"I hear that Mrs. Tousley is going to have a big wedding for Ann," said Joseph.

Mrs. Jones nodded yes.

"It's strange I have not been invited. What time is it to-night? Eight o'clock! Well, well, I hope it won't rain for the wedding—that's bad luck; and I hope Ann won't faint—she's very excitable. I told Jim Mayer that she looks very pale and has been overdoing getting ready for the wedding, and if she should have a fainting spell, who knows, maybe he might have a funeral instead of a wedding for his share! It's not likely to happen, you say? No; but her own mother died of heart disease, and you never can tell what may happen, as I told Mayer."

Mrs. Jones shed bitter tears that evening before the wedding. It was raining, and that, with Joseph's woeful hints of ill luck, had, as she had expressed it, set her nerves on edge. However, she remembered the saying that nature sheds all her tears for you on

a rainy wedding-day, and leaves you a life full of joy and free from tears; and this is what she told the bride.

Joseph wended his way homeward deep in thought. Arriving there he put on a worn, patched pair of overalls and the remains of a pair of heavy boots. During his preparations he thought of all that had happened that day. He remembered the tricks the small Tousley boys, as well as others, had played on him. He had not readily recognized that they were making fun of him; but when he did, he had let them enjoy it to their heart's content. They had made much fun of his stooping to pick up apples for a small child, and his efforts to stop a horse that a small boy was driving rapidly, but which Joseph thought was running away.

Joseph was far less stupid than his friends thought him, and, with all his rough manners and enjoyment when he made people feel uncomfortable, he never could bear to see people in real trouble.

At his age he was still a good swimmer, and had more than once rescued children in swimming. For this he refused thanks, and grew so very disagreeable when people tried to express their appreciation of so brave an act, that it was better to keep at a distance.

There was only one thing Joseph acutally hated, and that was work. "It kills a man before his time," he had been heard to say. No doubt Joseph deserved his reputation. Farmer Jones had said:

"In one hour Joseph can do less work than any

one man I know. His intention is to shuffle through life, and he's filling the position to perfection."

At eight the beautiful home of Mrs. Tousley was illuminated.

With his torn straw hat in one hand, and his big red handkerchief in the other, there entered Joseph Hackley. The door was open for the slight breeze, and all the guests were present, when, in his muddy boots, Joseph arrived. He looked at his boots, and then carefully removed them and walked in at the open door. He explained to the astonished Mrs. Tousley that his boots were muddy, and he feared he would spoil the carpet; therefore he took them off.

The lovely evening gowns were drawn away from contact with his dirty, patched overalls. He knew them all, and they knew him, for scarcely a day passed that he did not eat in the kitchen of one of these families. He knew they tolerated him only because he was considered feeble-minded, and his deceased wife had been a great favorite, and his mother was well loved.

He saw the dismayed faces of the people and of the hostess; but hush! the Wedding March was being played, and there was no time to get rid of Joseph.

When the wedding was over, Joseph hurried forward and put his right hand on the bride's arm.

"You never intended leaving me out, and knowing you must have made a mistake, and you would afterwards feel sorry, why, I came anyway. I wish you well, and that the disappointing trials all brides

and grooms must experience will fall less heavily on you. When death and trouble, and perhaps poverty, face you both, I trust you will not waver, but face them bravely back. A rainy night for a wedding is bad luck; but we must hope for the best. My wife and I were married on a rainy night, and to-night reminds me of it. What a happy year I had with her! But the bad luck came, for in a year she died. I brought you a wedding gift that belonged to her, a tiny gold locket in which she used to keep my picture. I leave the picture in it to remind you of the giver. Nell used to like you, and she would have felt I ought to attend your wedding, so I came. Enjoy the day while it lasts, for the night soon comes, is my last advice to you."

The bride was weeping.

Joseph turned to the mother: "I am sorry you have lost a daughter; she can never be the same to you again; but remember the comfort she was before you lost her." With a wave of his hand he bade farewell. The groom was trying to comfort his pretty bride, and to stop the tears of the mother.

Perhaps no man in the town was as happy as Joseph Hackley that night. No man had succeeded in making more of a sensation or of causing more commotion in so short a time as Joseph at the wedding.

With his shuffling step, and a chuckle that had more mirth in it than usual, contented Joseph Hackley, clothed as he was, threw himself on the mattress in his home, and soundly slept.

CAUGHT BY THE SEA.

A LOVE STORY.

A NUMBER of merry children played on the white sandy beach, while here and there happy groups of older people watched the frolic of the little ones.

Some of the young urchins yelled loudly as a wave would dash, half angrily and half playfully, against their faces. There were men and women, too, who, free from labor, were enjoying the salt air. Altogether it was a scene of great pleasure that two happy people sat watching.

"Dick Stevens is a fine boy. See him yonder swimming. I do wish I was in with him."

"Hard on your companion. But I tell you I'd hate to see you in, and have one of those treacherous waves lift you off your feet. The tide is going out now. When the sea catches one, it plays with him relentlessly."

"But the touch of the soft cool water is delicious, and O, how I love to see people swim! Now, Dick is said to be skillful at all outdoor sports. Do you remember last summer when you told me he was coming to spend the afternoon with me if it was convenient? Well, he came, and we had the gayest time imaginable at tennis."

Someway the above conversation did not seem to interest the girl's dark-haired companion, though he answered that he guessed Dick was good at outdoor sports. So she kept silent, letting the sand fall from between her fingers, and seemed to be greatly interested in the small grains. Thus they sat, quietly watching the bathers; one of the two envying them, the other perfectly content.

"Do put up the umbrella," said the dainty maiden, as she placed her hand on her hot head. She simply could not bear the deep silence that had fallen between them after the last conversation.

"O, I'm so sorry, Van, not to have done it before. I'm a thoughtless fellow, that's certain."

Her silence seemed to signify she agreed with him. All of a sudden she looked up at him, and laughed.

"I feel so happy, and yet it's a selfish joy, too."

"What is that?" asked Frank, all attention now.

"I have a whole month more of vacation, and that will be lovely."

"But if you get ready—if your answer is—O hang it! you know what I mean."

"Yes, but I have not decided yet, Frank; and, besides, you must not say hang it, for that is not a graceful way for small boys or large to express themselves."

She shook her head slowly, though her eyes looked ever so kindly at him.

"You see, I have to decide the same question for two people, and—O dear!—I don't know whether

to spend the month here or have no more summer resort vacation for this year."

"Is it Dick?" asked Frank, slowly.

"Why, what a funny question! Do not worry, but be a good boy, and if you're real nice I'll give up my vacation for you."

Her playful manner and determination not to be serious made him laugh, and he soon joined gayly in, and talked nonsense quite as skillfully as his charming friend.

The bathers seemed full of enjoyment as they splashed their hands in the waves. Long lines of merry girls stood hand in hand, waiting to jump each new wave, or else, if too late for that joy, to be allowed to swallow a large amount of salt water, over which they usually made as much fuss as a sick child over bad medicine.

"O, it's good to have vacation and such jolly weather as this."

The sun-kissed maiden smiled brightly as she looked at the sea as it tossed restlessly, and now and then sprinkled the white sand at her feet. Her companion laughed lightly and happily; for who would not do so on a day so full of beauty and a lovely, merry girl to keep them cheerful company?

"You have all summer, Van, so you say, and I only two weeks. This is my last day from business to enjoy this weather."

"Let's go in swimming, Frank; it's lots of fun."

Frank looked doubtfully at the lithe form by his side.

"Can you swim?" asked he.

"Surely I can, Frank," and she pouted ever so slightly. "Girls can swim as good as boys oftentimes. If you're about to be drowned I'll save you. Let's go!"

She jumped up, brushed the sand from her pretty frock, and started rapidly towards the bath-house. Evidently expected to follow, the youth quickly got to his feet, and in a second or so reached her side.

"I'm in for it, if you want to go."

"All right, ever so glad you feel braver," she laughed. "Why, there is Dick swimming under water."

A short time elapsed ere the girl appeared; then she looked all about for her partner. Not seeing him, she caught sight of Dick, and he of her. How pretty she appeared in the trim bathing suit, her hair neatly hid by a red bathing cap, and her small hands playing with the sand at her feet! As she lifted her brown face to his, he thought her a fairer picture than ever before, and felt glad he had not gone with Frank to help in an accident a quarter of a mile below. Then a jealous feeling took possession of his heart.

This was vacation, his and hers, and he would not give her Frank's message; they would go and spend the day together, and how good it would seem! She would part angry with Frank, and before she could see him and make it up they would be happy. So he came over to her.

"Saw Frank go down the beach yonder where

you can see the dark spot. Caught sight of a fair-faced girl, no doubt. Had poor taste, I can tell you."

Van's heart was heavy; she was much hurt at Frank's rudeness, so she took Dick's hand, and they went into the cool water. She would let Frank know she did not care; there were others who would look after her; but yet there was a forced sound to her laughter. She swam better than usual, and had just seated herself by Dick's side when she saw a small procession winding up the bank.

"What is the trouble, Dick? Do go and see."

"O, nothing much. Just some one fell into the water, and got too much salt from the sea," said Dick, wishing she had not seen the men, and that Frank had never existed, and quickly changed the subject.

A moment later—"O, there's Frank. I think you are unkind not to find out. I'll go myself." Before he could stop her she was gone.

Frank was nearing her; but she was too eager for news to remember she must be angry at him.

"What's the trouble?" then at sight of Dick's face made her think: "Mr. Arnold, will you please tell me what the procession was going up the hill?"

"When you say Frank," he laughed.

"Well, then, Frank," and she tossed her head angrily.

She noticed his bathing suit was quite wet. "Been swimming without me," she thought.

"A child was in swimming, and while I walked

along the beach waiting for you, I saw him go under. Of course I dashed in, and, lucky for him and my feelings, I rescued the poor little chap. But I had to help work over him, he was nearly gone, and the others just sat about and gazed, not knowing what to do for a half-drowned person. Poor wee tot! he pretty nearly made an end of it that time. The mother was frantic; but he is all right now. They carried him home to get rested."

The lovely dark eyes of the slender girl, who looked only sixteen but was fully nineteen, filled with tears.

"You might have sent me word, you were caring for him afterwards."

"I did tell Dick to inform you, and also not to let you go in swimming, the tide is going out so fast, and it's dangerous. I see you went."

"I did not get your message," she answered, quietly. Then her brown eyes opened wide, and she looked over to where Dick stood, with a dark, puzzled frown on her face.

Just then he joined them. Frank said nothing, but Dick said:

"Busy work, I suppose, yonder for your last holiday. You look kind of worn out. Glad Van and I have a long vacation yet."

The strange, big, brown eyes looked straight at Dick as she said quietly, laying her hand on Frank's arm:

"He saved a child while we were only thinking

of a good time. My vacation ends to-day also. Good-bye, Dick; shake hands."

They left him standing on the sand, the hot sun beating down unnoticed on his bowed head.

"I have thought over all you asked, Frank; you are a brave boy, and I am proud of you."

"Your answer?" asked he, with his eyes on her sweet face. He needed no words to tell him; he saw his answer in the happy upturned countenance.

"I'm going home when you do, Frank. My holiday for this summer is over, and my answer—can't you guess?"

THE ADVENTURES OF ZIM.

AN ADVENTURE STORY.

THE light elves, Zim and his brother, sailed for the unknown land of the fairies, which Zim hoped to discover and some day to possess.

A storm arising, both elves being poor seamen, their ship was lost, and they were cast upon a strange island.

Zim was delighted with the beauty of the place; for stretching as far as eye could see was a lawn of dark-green grass, and scattered about in its midst, as if playing hide-and-seek, were star-shaped flowers. Far in the distance something sparkled bright and shiny, as if Morning had built a throne at the edge of the sky, where the Sun, queen of brightness, dwelt and wielded a wand that kept nature resplendent in glory.

As they sat in the sun, they heard, ringing sweet and clear upon the air, the sound of silvery bells.

"I wonder what we have here?" said Zim.

The elves, fearing discovery, hid behind a bush. A few moments later there came in sight a number of beautiful fairies, carrying roses in their hands. As they drew near, the elves heard a heated discussion as to which was the fairest. When they reached the ocean they proceeded to undo their

golden hair. Being thus occupied, they did not see at first, approaching the group, another fairy on a white butterfly. She was a slight, dainty fairy, robed in white, with a crown of star-flowers on her head. With one accord the fairies knelt to her, and said:

"You bade us gather honey from the flower lips; forgive us that we disobeyed. We thought first to wash our hair in the sea, that salt diamonds might shine in our sunny tresses when we welcome the dwarf, your brother."

"Vain and thoughtless fairies, I am greatly grieved," said the queen. "My brother is here asking for you."

As she slid from the butterfly her jeweled slipper became unbuckled and fell to the ground. Mischievous Zim hurried from his hiding-place and got it. The fairies were too busy to notice the accident or the elf, so Zim safely resumed his hiding-place.

As a punishment for their vanity and their quarrel about their beauty, the queen caused the fairies to have white hair.

Zim caught and pulled a lock of the fairy Hope's hair for the pleasure of hearing her scream, and to his surprise and the queen's that one lock remained golden. The queen looked about and shuddered, for the star-flowers in the grass were wilted. Pointing to them she sighed, and said:

"This is the result of vanity, and your golden lock of hair, Hope, shows that an elf is here. An

elf, and wilted star-blossoms, means sorrow and tears to the Isle of—the Isle of—! O fairies, my slipper is lost, and our Isle's name has therefore fled from my memory! Hunt, maidens; for if our magic slipper can not be found, we are indeed punished for your vanity.

In the excitement, fearing discovery, the two mischievous elves sped swiftly to a safer place in the forest beyond.

“Perhaps if you try the slipper on we will learn the name of this island, and it may be the one we are seeking,” said Theon. “Do try it on, and see.”

“Our bodies are small, but our feet are long and pointed like skates; it may not fit,” woefully answered Zim.

To their delight, it fitted Zim perfectly.

“I must have the other slipper for the second letter,” said he. “But the first letter is Z.”

“Give it your first initial as a name, will you?” said Theon, and a quarrel ensued. About sunset they became friends, and wandered back to the fairy dell.

Guided by the slipper, the two elves wended their way to the fairy palace, which no elf could have found without the slipper.

On reaching it, Zim proposed that they change themselves into birds, and fly into the open window.

In the palace a strange sight met their eyes, the fairies were weeping, the queen was blind and had almost lost her memory. Hope was by her queen's side, trying to comfort her.

"I have one bright lock," she whispered. "As it shines, so is there hope for us; for vanity shall cease, queen, and we shall yet have joy."

The queen, paying no attention to Hope, turned to speak to her brother.

"Do you know the elves?"

"We dwarfs are not their friends," he said. "To be sure I may be to blame for this trouble, for I caused a storm to tip over a glass boat containing two elves; but I supposed they were drowned."

"They landed here, for elves never drown, and, finding vanity reigning in our hearts, we have been an easy prey to their mischief," sobbed the queen.

"Queen, I will sacrifice my fairy form and become a sea-maid that I may watch and keep the elves from leaving the island with the slipper," said Hope. "To be sure I can never regain the old color of my hair, but I do not mind that, if I can save our land."

So she departed to perform her promise.

Zim sighed. "I wish I had the other slipper," whispered he. At the very moment he spoke, the queen, who was full of despair, pulled off the other slipper and threw it to the far end of the room.

"There will never be joy now that the slipper is gone; so what use is one without the other?" she cried.

The fairies were so surprised at the queen's anger that they did not move for some moments. When they did search for the slipper it had disappeared.

The elves flew out of the window, and resuming their former shape, Zim, when a safe distance from the palace, hastened to try on the slipper.

"O, I have it!" he cried. "The second letter is O. The Isle of Zo, meaning the Isle of Light or of the star-flower. Without the slippers the fairies lose all their magic powers. The symbol of joy and light is the star-flower, which grows so thickly here. If it is picked by an elf, and the slippers are given to a fairy disguised in the shape of a sea-maiden, we can secure a boat. The star-flower, however, can not be picked without taking off the slippers, and they never can be put on again. Unless the star-flower wilts, even after the slippers are gone, it will remind him of the name of the island. However, I will not part with the slippers; I will wear them home," said Zim.

Being weary, both elves lay down to sleep.

Theon was hungry and homesick, and cared for no more adventure; so when Zim was asleep, he deftly took off the slippers, plucked a star-flower and hurried to the seashore. As he stood there a small sea-maiden drew herself up on a high rock, where others were already seated. She sang, high above the song of the others, a song of warning to the men at sea, bidding them listen to the roaring waves rather than to her companion's charming song. Theon noticed that the chief singer's hair was perfectly white except for one golden lock, and he knew it was the fairy Hope. Hiding his flower, he coaxed her to the shore, and on obtain-

ing her promise to give him a boat for the slippers, he gave them to her. After getting her promise, which, being a fairy, she had to keep, he held before her startled gaze the star-flower, and Hope knew that, unless it wilted in Zim's hand, the elves, knowing where to come, would try to take the island. Still the magic slippers gave the fairies their old magic arts to use in defense of their land.

Zim was very angry when he found the slippers gone; but he consoled himself with the star-flower and the glass boat that now lay at anchor by the shore. Hope sang a song of safety to them until they were far at sea, and then, resuming her fairy form, she returned to the palace.

The Isle of Zo was full of rejoicing on the return of the slippers, the queen's sight was restored, and the white hair of the fairy was again golden. Hope's hair, however, remained white, with one golden lock.

The queen rewarded Hope thus:

"When the flowers are sleepy," she said to Hope, "you shall waken them to beauty. My ethereal fairy, you may now enjoy reward for your good deeds, and travel to our air queen's home with me, to bring glad greetings from her. You shall ever be with me."

The fairy Hope was content, and the others rejoiced with her. As the fairies looked at the star-flowers surrounding the palace, they saw that the flowers were once more beautiful, and this fact made them trust that Zim would forget the name

of the Isle of Zo. Since vanity no longer reigned in their hearts, Joy took the crown, and ruled instead.

As the glass boat got out at sea, Zim was so pleased with the news he had to tell the Light elves, who had long searched for the fairy's land, that he bade Theon join him in a glad song of triumph, and they laughed and made merry. When they reached the elves' land they found new rulers had come to control and teach the Light elf-band how to work and make the place beautiful. Frey and Freyja, Summer and Beauty, had come to rule and help the elves. Zim laughed when he heard the news, and held before the surprised elves the star-flower. He had taken good care of it, and it was still beautiful.

"They can never make a place as fair as the one we shall find; for I have had a grand adventure, and learned the Fairy Isle name. With the name I can guide you to the land you have long hunted for in vain," said Zim, boastfully. "Their vanity caused my success. If we go there, we can conquer them, and live in a lovely place without work, for they will be our slaves and work for us."

"Tell it, Zim," cried Theon.

His cry was echoed by all the elves; for a land where they need not work was a place to go to as soon as possible, because the new rulers believed there was a time for work as well as for play.

"I know you are all anxious, so I will not keep you in suspense," said Zim. "This flower brings

us to a playground where there is no work-day. Look upon the flower—the flower that through my bravery in going to a strange land, my sacrifice of jeweled slippers and magic arts, my courage in the midst of storm at sea—I brought here for us elves that I might secure a beautiful place free from all labor. This flower, for which I underwent so much, tells us to go to the Isle of—the Isle of—.”

The Light elves looked, and saw the flower was wilted. With a shriek of rage, Zim cried:

“Friends, we are lost, for the name has fled!”

DOUBLE EDITING.

A DECIDED PLOT.

"AND so, with a sadder heart, she let them pass by her." Over and over again Elizabeth read these words. "That sounds tragic," and a satisfied sigh rent the air.

"Mother, mother!"

A gentle voice, not unmixed with surprise, answered: "Yes, daughter; I thought you went to Jessie's for the day."

"I really could not, mother dear," said the girl, embracing that comfortable looking person. "I have written a new story, and it is called 'A LOST HEART.' I am sure it will take the prize offered in the papers."

"Well, read ahead," and Mrs. Atland took a stocking in her ever-busy hand and seated herself near the bright-eyed girl.

For a time the soft, monotonous voice of the girl was all that could be heard except the incessant ticking of the clock. At last the voice ceased.

"There! Jorden said I could not write a story worth publishing. He says Nell Fairfield writes finely, and had her name in the honorable list last week. Jorden wanted to know if she did not get her ideas from some one else. I said, 'Of course, Nell's father being chief friend of a newspaper

reporter, she had influence.' If they judge truly, do n't you think this will do, under my own name?" (She did not add that her stories under Nell's name were accepted; nor that Nell thought silence on this subject was best, and Kitty would get a share of the pin-money.) Her sweet, girlish face was full of interest, and the mother nodded an approving smile as she answered in the affirmative. Late that afternoon Nell arrived to spend a week or two.

"O, you dear; you're just in time to go to the moonlight picnic to-night. Thurlow Jorden is to take us, and it will be grand. I did not really expect you until to-morrow. Is n't it jolly?"

The busy little miss fluttered about on tiptoe, and gave her friend a hug every now and then in her delight. She was so slight that no one would have believed her eighteen.

"You know Thurlow? I declare I am delighted. By the way, he says that you write, and I never told our secret even to mother. That makes me think, I wonder what mother does with the first copies of all my stories; puts them away for keeps, I guess. She never reads the Chicago papers, so she does not see yours. I am trying my hand again, and shall send this one story in my own name. I know you do not like it, so I felt you would not care. Thurlow says skill and talent are the cause of stories being accepted; but I know, Nell, it's influence. Do not tell him that I am going to try this one alone, for he thinks me a fraud in that line."

“Ever get any published alone, Puss?” said Nell, patting Kit McLain’s fair head.

“No, not yet. I’ve only tried twice, you know, and I guess they did not read them, for every one says I have talent and some day will be famous; but, Nell, those two were not accepted. Surely this one will be, for think how well those you sent of mine have taken. But, of course, you have influence.”

She did not catch sight of Nell’s pitying glance at her hopeful face. While Kitty helped her mother get supper, Nell sat in the dainty little bed-room prepared for her, and thought.

Jorden was to take them to-night. How well she knew him! Once a poor little farm-boy, who, she felt, was too poverty-stricken for her big parties; then a man struggling to make his way—just a year ago; now a wealthy mine-owner, and as handsome as of old he seemed homely. One of these unexpected discoveries of a good mine in Colorado, and the help of a wealthy man friend, and this poor boy was a wealthy man. For a year Nell had traveled, and she remembered no decided answer had been really given in words. Indeed, she had resented the poor boy’s proposal, and had felt it scarcely worth while to answer one way or the other. Now she looked long in the small mirror in her room at her lovely face, and ended her survey with a happy nod of her head. She would scheme and win Jorden; he liked a talented girl, and so she would succeed in all.

"O, Puss, are you dressing already?" she asked, on opening the door of that young lady's room. "That's a dainty white frock; do let me try it on. So thin and frail; are you not almost afraid to wear it? No! Well, let me see it.—Oh!"

Puss, who was busy washing her face, looked up with the towel in her dripping hands.

"I've torn this; I'm so sorry. Look! Dear me, how could I have done it?"

"O, what will I do, Nell? That is all the best dress I have."

Nell went alone with Jorden; for the tear was beyond mending, and so Kitty could not go. She did not see Jorden when he came, but let Nell give her excuse. After they had departed she decided to write another story for Nell.

"It must be in by Wednesday," she sighed; "and if I can not enjoy this vacation evening in the lovely woods, I will write a story."

This story took some time, and was called "A Close Call." It related her own sad evening, and Leland, the hero, was left in a sad state of mind. Kitty could not tell which girl to marry him to. At last she decided on the rich one. Before retiring, she made three type-written copies.

Nell returned to find Puss sound asleep, the papers of her story lying upward on the table. She glanced anxiously at Puss, who was sleeping soundly, then took them in her hand to her room. She would not awake Kitty, but wait till the morning to tell of her good time.

.

Jorden called two weeks later. He had been called out of town, and had just returned. Puss met him at the door.

"I sent a story, Thurlow, and mother thinks it good; but it has come back."

Jorden's eyes were fixed on a beautiful, stately girl in the parlor, and Puss felt a little neglected as, a moment later, he held Nell's hand in his, and looked earnestly at her. Kitty soon left them to make lemonade.

"Thurlow, you said long ago that you would marry a famous woman; I am on my way; and once you asked me to be your bride. I have thought it over. Guess my answer;" and her glorious eyes looked up at him.

"I have found name is not everything, but speaking of it reminds me that there is a clever, pretty tale called 'A CLOSE CALL' in the paper, and the ending gave so much to one girl, and so little to the other. One girl was rich, the other poor. This story has your name above it. You have taken a year to decide that question I asked; in that time, one would naturally judge, you must have written a good deal, and I, too, have succeeded since then. As I read this story again, of a torn dress, I thought indeed the lad had a close call between the two girls. A copy of this tale was sent me before a little girl went to sleep. I found it on my table when I came home. It must have arrived while you and I sailed in the moonlight." He looked straight into those treacherous, lovely eyes, and they

fell before his steady gaze. "The stories are the same. Puss's other story, 'A Lost Heart,' under her own name was refused, for it was not as clever as the first. Under your name you have printed ten stories; I will not tell you how I know, but Puss did not tell me. Your own stories, five in all, have been sent back. There is the child I love and cherish. Nell, let Pet have the next story herself."

Puss was all smiles as she came in.

"My cake is just grand, Thurlow; you both must eat lots of it."

"Pet, your story is accepted," said he.

Kitty nearly dropped the tray. "My story! Why, how do you know? Which one? O dear!" and she bit her lip.

"You sent me a copy that night of 'A Close Call.'"

"O no!"

"Then your mother did, and has sent me a copy of every story that you have written lately. By the way, Nell, congratulate me, for I am the happiest man alive. Little Pet and I are engaged. She has given you all her best stories, and given me herself."

"They would not have been accepted if I had sent them," murmured Kitty.

"In one day you gave me your hand without a long thought about it, little girl. Nell, I am sure, will succeed in her work, as we have done in knowing our minds at once—if my dear Pet writes as of old for her."

"Puss," said Nell, her face a scarlet color, "I will write my own stories or none," and tears of anger and vexation filled her eyes. "It's not influence, Puss, I am sure."

Kitty looked surprised at Jorden as Nell ran from the room, and was about to follow her; but he laid his hand tenderly on her shoulder.

"She is tired, Pet, and wants to be alone."

"If not influence, why were they accepted?" She looked earnestly at Thurlow.

"I think," said Jorden as he smiled kindly down into the blue eyes of the one he held most precious, "influence would not get it published, little sweetheart. But I know the key that opens the door to success, and its name is talent."

ONLY AN EASTER EGG.

A RELIGIOUS STORY.

MRS. ATSON was queer; at least, every one thought so.

"She has no heart at all," said the people in the village where she lived.

She never came to church, and was called a heathen. Many prayers were offered for her; but still she staid away. She never made calls, and seldom received them after the first calls on her entrance to the town. Besides, she wore oddly made dresses of fashions long gone by. Not on account of poverty, but simply because she had lost all interest in dress. The people considered her penurious and selfish. Through all these criticisms the cold features of Mrs. Atson never changed.

Now, at the foot of the hill from this old lady's home lived a poor family of three,—a mother and her two children.

It happened that on the eve before Easter this family were all gathered in one large room. This room took the place of sitting-room, kitchen, and bed-room; they had, however, one more which was used as a sleeping-room. These two rooms made up what little Lily called home.

The mother sewed by the day for a living; the

elder daughter was an invalid, and the baby Lily was too young to help her mother.

On this particular evening the mother lay very ill in the large bed in the chief room. The daughter, with her feeble strength, could scarcely manage to do the housework and care for her sick mother. It had been going on so for a week, and the money was all gone, and with an anxious heart the girl thought of the morrow.

"If Lily were older, she might be able to help," she said sadly to herself.

Lily was a tiny child of five, with the most beautiful of dark eyes and hair that curled in soft ringlets about her face. Were it not for her thin features, she would have been a beautiful child. She sat on the floor with an egg and the remains of a coloring paper. Suddenly she sprang up from her seat and, running to her mother's bed, cried:

"Look, look, mamma, I have made myself such a beautiful egg!"

Indeed the child had succeeded well, and the egg looked like Joseph's coat, it was so literally covered with many colors.

"It is indeed very pretty," said the mother; "and now you won't feel sad because you don't get more eggs, will you?" she continued as she touched her lips to the little one's.

"No, mamma; but I wish I could go to the church and see the lilies."

"The lilies," murmured the mother, softly. "On Easter-day, God's lilies. Little one," she whispered

gently, "I am going to see God's lilies, but I can not take you there. Be patient, and, if not to-morrow, at least some time, you will see His lilies."

That night the mother grew rapidly worse, and the invalid sister sat by her side through the dreary hours.

In the morning Lily rose from her tiny bed, and, dressing quickly, crept noiselessly out of the house. A sudden thought had entered her busy little brain, and she was very anxious to follow its directions. In her small hand she held carefully her Easter egg, rolled in a piece of paper. On she ran, straight up the hill, until she stood before a large, beautiful house. She drew the shawl more closely about her, and walked rapidly up to the door.

"Is Mrs. Atson in?" she asked the doorkeeper. He eyed the child a few minutes in scorn; then said, abruptly:

"Yes, but not to beggars."

The child's pale face flushed painfully, and the tears would come into her eyes, although she tried bravely to conceal her feelings.

"Please," she said, slowly, "tell her that there is a little child at the door who wishes very much to see her."

"Well, since you insist, I will do so; but you'll find her answer corresponds with mine," replied he. In a few minutes he returned to the door, with a look of surprise and anger. "Come right in, miss; she will see you."

The child stepped softly on the dainty hall car-

pet. After each step she would look back at what she had already passed over, and, seeing the carpet still remained the same, she took more courage and walked faster. The servant seeing her look back so often, at last asked her the cause.

"I was afraid," said Lily, very soberly, "that I might hurt the roses."

The man burst into a hearty peal of laughter; but seeing the very puzzled expression on the sweet baby face, said, as soberly as possible, "O no, it do n't hurt the carpet in the least to be walked on."

She entered a beautiful room, and her little feet stepped on a carpet of lilies; at least it seemed so to her. The pattern of the paper was of lilies also, and in the window was a large number of beautiful, blooming Easter lilies.

A tall, stately woman advanced to meet the child. The wonderful spell of delight was not broken until she heard the cold tones of the mistress.

"What is it?" asked she.

"I came," said little Lily softly, "to bring you an Easter egg."

Mrs. Atson sat down and motioned the child to do likewise, and then said:

"An Easter egg?"

"Yes," said Lily, carefully unwrapping it. "I fixed it all myself, 'cause I wanted a Easter egg so badly, and then last night I thought you, too, might not get one, so I thought I should like to give it to you."

Mrs. Atson took the egg offered her, and looked

at it in silence a few minutes, and then asked the question that lay in her mind, "Why did you think I needed it more than any one else?"

Her tone was suspicious, for in her heart she feared some one had sent the little one to her, thinking so to influence her, and with this thought her face grew harder.

"Because," said the child, slowly, "you always seemed so lonesome, and I am often lonely too; so I thought it would be nice if you and I could spend our Easter together." Suddenly she paused, and looked about the room, her large eyes wide open, and a smile on her face, as with parted lips she gazed about her.

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Atson, in her heart thinking how sweet and fair the little one was.

"Is this God's lily room?" said the soft, musical, childish voice, in a gentle, awed tone.

"God's lily room," repeated Mrs. Atson.

She also cast her eyes about the room, and suddenly, as if a mist had been withdrawn from her sight, everything became more lovely.

"It has never been," she said, mentally, "but it shall be." Aloud she said, "Why, little one?" and her voice was soft and low.

"Because there are so many lilies here, and this is Easter-day," said Lily.

"Then you belong in here, little one," said Mrs. Atson; "for your name is Lily, is it not?"

"Yes," said the child, thoughtfully, "and mamma is going to the Lily-land above the sky. It's so

lovely here in God's lily-room that I think I could wait quietly before I go to join mamma, if I could always stay here. I wanted to go and see the church, but I had no dress, and now I think it could not be fairer than this room, even with the music."

The sentence sounded strangely from a child so young.

Tears filled the eyes of Mrs. Atson, who was supposed to have no heart. She stooped over and kissed the cheek of the child, who sat by her side. Then slowly she drew out the story, from those childish lips, of the suffering and sorrow of the tiny home at the bottom of the hill. She learned also that the little one had eaten nothing that morning, and that the elder sister had been sleeping when she stole quietly from her home to give her own little Easter egg to a stranger.

"Would you like to go to the church?" said she, her voice so sweet and tender that no one would have known her for the cold, haughty Mrs. Atson.

"O yes!" cried the child, clasping her hands together, and looking into the eyes of the woman by her side.

"Would you mind wearing an old-fashioned dress, little one?" she said, and again her tone grew bitter. Perhaps this child had laughed at her like the other children, she thought.

"O no!" said Lily; "then I would be an Easter child of long ago."

"What strange ideas for a little head!" thought

Mrs. Atson; but aloud she said, "Come up stairs with me."

She took the tiny hand in hers, and the child chatted freely and gayly to her friend. At the top of the stairs they came into a long hall, and, passing down this, they soon came to a door on the right. This Mrs. Atson opened, and they entered a finely furnished room; but to both their eyes the lily-room was the fairer.

Mrs. Atson raised the lid of a large chest that stood at one end, and took from it some tiny but beautiful old-style garments.

"Come, dear, let's try these on; they belonged to my own little girl."

Then she robed her in the dainty old silk gown.

"How very lovely!" cried the child. "But you said these were your own little girl's," she continued.

"Yes," said Mrs. Atson, tears flooding her eyes, and this time flowing down her cheeks. "They were my little darling's, but she was taken long ago from me. So now the Lily who has come to see me, and given me her own Easter egg, decorated by her dear hands, shall wear them."

Then Mrs. Atson received a surprise greater than any before, for Lily rushed to her, and, throwing her tiny arms about her neck, declared, in accents soft and tender, the little sentence which means so much:

"I love you—O, I do love you so well!"

"Now, my dear, you must have something to

eat," said Mrs. Atson when the child had unclasped her arms from about her neck, and stood before her, a beautiful picture of a little, old-fashioned maiden. Wonderful to relate, Lily was so like Mrs. Atson's own lost pet that her heart grew still warmer towards her, and she longed to have her for her own.

"After we have breakfasted, you go to the church, and come again to see me."

The baby face for a moment lit up with a glad smile, then suddenly grew sober. "Won't you go too?" she asked.

"I can not," said Mrs. Atson, her tone almost harsh once more.

"Then," said the little Lily, "I guess maybe we had better stay together in God's lily-room, 'cause I do n't want to go if you can't."

At this moment a fierce struggle was being fought between two passions—false pride and her new-found love; but the child knew it not. Her next words proved that love had conquered.

"Well, my good fairy, I will go."

After they had breakfasted together in the elegant old dining-room, Mrs. Atson held Lily's hand in hers and they started for the church. On arriving there, Mrs. Atson took a front seat for the child's sake.

The people gazed long at the tall, stately woman in her queer gown, and the beautiful child in her quaint costume of long ago.

"I think the angels' singing is lovely," said the soft baby voice, while her dark eyes opened wider

and a glad smile played about her lips, as the choir began to sing, and the glorious Easter music pealed forth from the grand old organ.

Although Lily did not understand the sermon, she realized that some transformation had taken place in the woman by her side, whose whole countenance showed to all about her the peace and joy of a soul brought again into harmony with God's will. Long ere the service was over the tiny head leaned against the arm of Mrs. Atson, and the deep-brown eyes were closed. No one could tell the thoughts of Mrs. Atson, but the look on her face as she gazed upon the sleeping child revealed to the people that Mrs. Atson had a heart, and one of God's little ones had found it.

Mrs. Atson accompanied the child home. On entering the house, Lily rushed to her mother's bedside and gave her a sweet, tender kiss, and then introduced Mrs. Atson as her friend who lived in the lovely house on the hill.

Instantly Mrs. Leland knew who she was, and great was her surprise. She lived three more days, three of the most peaceful days of her life, and it gave her great joy that her little Lily had found the way into a heart seemingly closed to all sympathy and love.

The best medical service was secured, and every dainty comfort procured for the mother, but she was already past earthly help. One bright, beautiful morning, after pressing loving kisses upon her daughter's cheeks, she passed away with a joyful

smile on her pale face; for Mrs. Atson had assured her that she would always care for her children, and told her how lonely she was for some one to love and care for her.

A few days later these two came to live in the elegant home on the hill.

The people in the little town believe now that Mrs. Atson has a heart; and she is no longer termed an unbeliever, for she is an earnest helper in their Church; and every Sunday finds her with Lily's tiny hand in hers, entering its doors.

The sweet invalid sister at home often thinks of the passage of Scripture, "And a little child shall lead them," and then says, "Surely Lily did more than I, grown as I am, ever could have done."

Another Easter-day is here, and the scene that we now behold is somewhat changed. Lily is seated by a simply but daintily dressed lady, while near by, on a large leather sofa, lies the sweet-faced older sister, much stronger and very happy.

Yes, Lily is waiting hand in hand with her sister and Mrs. Atson in what the little one has named "God's Lily-room."

Surely God's angels hover over them; and in reverent love for their Savior, who has given her these joys, Mrs. Atson utters the sweet child's name for her favorite room—

"God's Lily-room."

A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.

A COMMERCIAL STORY.

ON a rise of land in the center of a small island stood a newly-built paper-mill. The island was inclosed on one side by the river, and on the other side by the feeder. The sound of machinery at work gave evidence that busy hands and minds were already employed behind its walls.

Jim Cook, who had worked earnestly as clerk in a book-shop, and had carefully laid aside a small sum, and Rob Anderson, who had inherited a comfortable fortune and desired to invest it in some profitable enterprise, had put their money together, and the new mill was the result of their careful planning.

The partners had found success evident from the first, and at the end of a year they felt so fully assured of it that the following April they both married: Rob to May Irn, and Jim to Lillian Mayer.

Thus their married life seemed assured of peace from money troubles; and as that is the bane of young married people's existence, the two girls were considered unusually fortunate.

When a mill hand was off duty from illness or other cause, Jim took his place, and worked as hard as any of his help. Rob was not slow to follow, and

so it happened that often the two men were obliged to work at night in the mill.

One night, a little over a year after their marriage, as Rob and Jim had not returned, both May and Lillian retired early, tired out from the sultry, rainy day, and uncertain when the men would be home.

Just before sunrise, May was aroused from her slumbers by a strange sound, like that of a frightful wind-storm. Startled, she leaped from her bed, and, hurriedly dressing, went to the door of the cottage. There she saw many people as excited as herself at the unusual sound. Now it was more like angry waves than wind, and for a moment May's heart seemed to stand still; for she thought of the river and the mill. Just then a hand was slipped into hers, and Lillian's voice, sharp and harsh with fear, said:

"May, I believe it's the river! Come, people are going that way. Lillian was clad in a thin wrapper over her night-clothes, and wore bed-room slippers; but she thought nothing of her appearance, for her husband was on the island, and if the river overflowed its banks, and the dam gave way, where would he be? Terror lent wings to their feet.

Before they reached the best place to overlook the feeder, lights were to be seen in plenty near the shore; for the town people were now thoroughly aroused. No doubt was now in their minds that it was the river!

The roaring voice was at hand; the river had overflowed its banks, and, in fiendish delight, leaped

in torrents into the feeder. Nothing could be done until daylight showed the extent of the mischief.

"O God, help Rob!" said May, while Lillian cried out to the men: "The bridge is gone! Could we build a raft?"

The answer was: "The water would hurl any raft we might make to destruction."

May spent her time in prayer; Lillian in planning means of rescue when dawn should kindly lift the veil of darkness.

When at last the sun began to peep from her hiding-place in the east, the wives realized more fully the terrible disaster that had befallen them and their loved ones.

The mill, being situated on a rise of land, was still safe; but the path leading to it was completely covered with water. The bridge was gone, and triumphant waves dashed higher and higher on their road, the end of which meant complete victory for the heartless waters, the reaching and destroying of the mill.

"O, they will starve before we can rescue them!" cried May.

Lillian spent no time in tears.

"If the dam above the mill does not give way, then they are safe. As for food, why we can put that in a pail and throw it across the feeder to them!"

This seemed almost impossible; but it was accomplished by the aid of more than one kindly, strong arm.

The husbands could not hear the talk of their dear ones, for the waves seemed determined to raise their voice higher. So for them there was nothing to do but to wait. O, the agony of waiting, when there can be seen no light of hope, and death stares one in the face!

All that day and the next the water steadily rose, and help seemed still far away, for all plans of rescue had failed.

"Some way I feel that, whatever happens, Jim and Rob will be left us; but all we can do now is to wait," said Lillian.

"For what!" sobbed May.

"For God's help," quietly answered Lillian, as she finished tying up the pail that contained their husbands' dinner.

As they approached the river, a strange sight met their gaze. Several large trees, pulled up by the roots, were tossed over the dam into the feeder. One larger than the others had caught between the banks, and stayed.

On this log two figures could be seen creeping slowly, by means of it, across the watery grave.

When first it had caught so strangely, the two men had discussed the slim chance of escape.

"If it slips we are lost; but it's the only chance. The dam can not hold out long against the pressure of the rocks and trees coming down upon it. It may give way at any moment, and then our lives would not be worth a straw," said Rob, and, with

a silent shake of the head, Jim agreed to try the only chance of escape from death.

Now they disappeared from sight by the rushing waters leaping over the trunk; again they nearly slipped into the angry water, for it was very hard to stay on the slippery tree-trunk.

Suddenly, when near the shore, in fact at arm's length from it, the tree slowly began to move, and they knew they could go no farther. Lillian had planned for just such a mishap, and the men reached for the rope flung them by a strong hand on shore.

Safe on the bank, wet and weary, stood the partners, and silently clasped hands, but said no word. Each understood the meaning of that clasp.

As each stood with his loved wife at his side, all silently watching the raging water, they saw the tree over which they had passed, tossed onward as if it was no lighter than a leaf. Great tree-trunks, following in its wake, were dashed swiftly by. Suddenly there was a roar so horrible that the land seemed shaken by its might, and the dam gave way.

"Ah, Lillian," said Jim, "the mill is gone, and all our worldly wealth."

"Poverty stares us in the face, that's certain," said Rob.

"O, I don't care about poverty," sobbed May, so glad, that she shed joyful tears, "I've got you, Rob."

"Yes, and some one will help you start afresh, and, if necessary, I can get back my position as

stenographer," said Lillian. "So don't you dare worry, Jim dear."

The two men had thought they possessed many friends; but although these were extremely sorry for their loss, none of them would furnish money for them to start anew.

"O yes," one man said, "I know you'd pay the loan back with good interest if you could; but some other accident might happen, and then where would our money be?" He expressed the general sentiment. Such answers filled Jim and Rob with despair.

John Adams, an old lover of Lillian, heard the news of the wash-out.

"It was their whole worldly wealth," he said. "However, Jim has a fortune left in Lillian. She never was a pretty girl, with her freckled face and yellow hair; but there never lived a brighter and better girl as far as I know women. Had he not stepped in my way, I'd have married her. I wonder what she saw in him that I lacked? Well, love will not keep them from the poorhouse; money and work must do that. I suppose they can get small jobs; but what a young married man needs is steady work. Lillian worked mighty hard before she married, and she needs a rest. Jim seemed a reliable and energetic man also, as far as I can find out about him,—and Rob Anderson? Well, I know very little about him."

A week later, Rob and May sat in the bright little

parlor of Lillian's home while she read aloud a wonderful letter Jim had received.

"Just think of it!" Jim said, when she finished reading it; "he owns the water power in H——, and land there, and will let us have it free. Then he will lend us money to start afresh. He will take a mortgage on our new mill, and give us five years to pay it off. Think of it, Lillian; and it's all for love of you, I know! I tell you, I admire a fellow who, losing you, shows such a favor to the man who robbed him of you. We'll pay him back with good interest, and have, besides, cake on our table at least once a week, instead of hardtack all day."

"It's a mighty big risk for John to take," said some of the men of the town. "I'm glad I won't be the loser."

A few days later the two families left for the town where John owned the water power and a tract of land.

John kept his promise, and lent the money at a low rate of interest, taking a security on the yet unbuilt mill.

Within three months a new mill, larger and better equipped than the other, was in working order.

Lillian suggested that she take charge of Jim's account-books to save him the expense of a book-keeper.

"Everything saved will mean our debt paid sooner, and I will enjoy the work very much," she pleaded when Jim protested; so at last he allowed her to do so.

"There is nothing I can do," said May, looking almost with envy at her more gifted friend.

"Make a bright, cheery, comfortable home for Rob," said Lillian. "You're not made for a business woman, and one book-keeper is enough; so cheer up. I tell you what you can do, though; dismiss your cook, and do your own work; that is what I've done. We can not afford help now."

Her advice was quickly followed, and so the wives as well as the husbands helped towards the debt.

"Years have passed since then," said Jim, telling the story to a number of friends, "but not many years, and we have paid the money back with interest, and you see we have each a comfortable home, and Rob has a yard for his baby to play in."

"That's not all, either," gleefully chimed in Lillian. "The kindness can never be repaid, but think what the money paid and mortgage lifted means to us. Why, men, it means this is the real dawn, for we four, of a business enterprise that, despite the struggle of our first trial in the paper-mill business, has been, and shall be, thank God, a lasting success!"

SLUMBER-LAND.

A DESCRIPTION.

I STOOD in dreamland long ago, in the Forest of Shadows, on the strange shore of Slumber-land. As I looked upon the rich beauty before me, standing in its very midst, the soft sunlight smiling here and there, and by its side frowning shadows, I was filled with a great longing to dwell in this fair place. I listened to the rich voices of the forest songsters, to the stories told by the dwellers of this strange place, which one could so well understand. The singing brook and the dainty flowers, robed in their brightest gowns, clustered near its side, and were stilled into silence by the sweet lullaby and love ballads the old brook sang. Even the bashful violet lifted up its head, and, forgetting itself, looked up at the great trees overhead, which rustled their leaves in time to the music of the brooklet as he danced gayly over the pebbles on his way. One can almost see the fairies here and there, dancing in the shade of the trees, whose years are well-nigh spent; and the bluebells, as they shake their heads at the jokes their friend, the wind, whispers in their ears, makes one believe the story that the fairies do dance by bluebell chimes. The wild notes of strange birds, the sweet song of a thrush, and the hoot of the blind

old owl, all tell of solitude, and make one long to be free as they, as full of joy and life as are the wild songsters of the woods. Into such a place of perfect beauty was born and reared Alpon, the child of the forest.

Alpon was a beautiful child, so it seemed to me. His sun-kissed face and dark-brown eyes full of the mysterious forest light, and his long dark hair which clustered about his face in a free glad way of its own, endeared him to me at first glance.

"Do you live here?" asked I of this queer child of the Forest of Shadows.

"Yes," answered he in music-like tones. "I dwell ever here; it is my home. At night I am always busy with strangers who wish to wander here, and I lead the way; but it is seldom they come in the day-time to this glad dale."

"Take me there, little Alpon, sweet forest child," cried I.

"I will lead you," he answered, laughing gayly, and clapping his brown hands, "to the fairest place of all, where the fairies have their midnight feasts and dance about the oldest tree of our great wood. This tree has not a leaf upon its tired limbs, nor has it one green thing at its foot, but the fairies come with garlands of flowers, the fragrant rose and lily-of-the-valley; ay, and even the timid violet comes with them. Then the whole forest begins its music; the grass rustles a low refrain, the brook sings, the trees shake their leaves and keep time with the song of the birds. Ah! every kind of bird

is there; it is the light of our Shadow Forest, this fair place."

His freckled face was full of the wild free joy of a forest lover, and his laugh rang out like sweet music on the fresh clear air of the forest world.

"There are wild beasts there, but tamed by fairies' love, they harm no one."

"But," continued he, "there is still another part of our woods which is dark and dreary; great swamps are there, and the hawk makes it his home. Wild beasts dwell there also, but they are not tamed by any one, and gladly would they devour all in their way. 'T is called the Elves' Nightmare Land. The elves are hideous creatures, and they dance wild dances about those swampy places, with thorns and weeds about their heads. Ah! it is a dreadful place, where terror reigns supreme. Come, maid, we must hasten; thou shalt choose which path we take."

"You do not seem to like that place, Alpon. Indeed it is not a pleasant picture you have put before my eyes," I said.

"I love the place best where together the sun and shadow play at tag. This place is my favorite, and yet I am so busy guiding people about my land I do not have much time here. Choose now, quickly, if you care to visit this place."

Then I noticed what I had not before: two paths led from where we stood. One seemed to go into the darkest part of the forest, where, my guide told me, Darkest Midnight on her ebony throne, robed in blackest gown, reigned alone. The other was

a bright place ; for I could see a light as of the sun smiling in the distance. In this light place, Alpon told me, on a throne of gold, in robes of fire, Sunshine, happy Queen Sunshine, held her sway.

Laughing still, we danced together down the sunshine path of Shadow Forest, into the great Slumber-land.

SEP 13 1905

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00002038717